

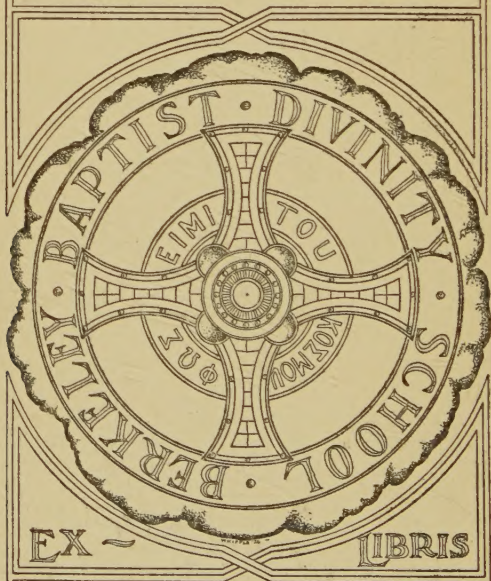
THE WORKER AND WORK SERIES

THE BEGINNERS'
WORKER AND WORK

FREDERICA BEARD

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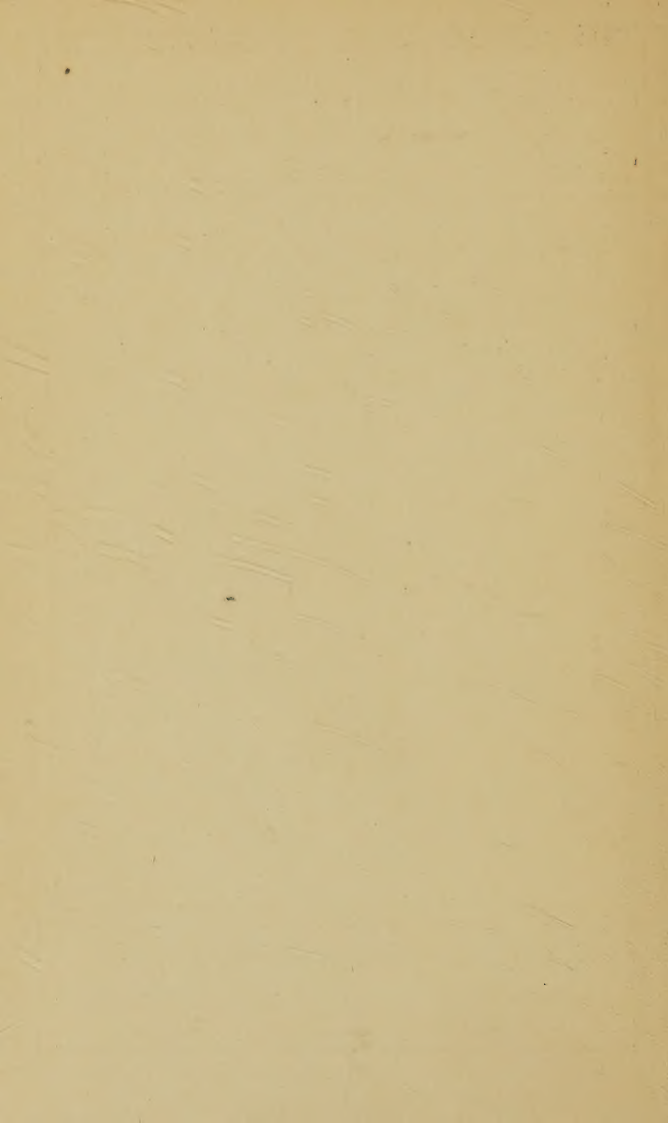
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THE WORKER AND WORK SERIES

HENRY H. MEYER, EDITOR

THE BEGINNERS'
WORKER AND
WORK

By

FREDERICA BEARD



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TO SUCH BELONGETH THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Few chapters in the history of religious education are more fascinating than those dealing with the application of modern educational principles and approved pedagogical methods to the work of Christian nurture and training in the church school. These principles, based as they are upon the developmental conception of life, require that the growing child, with its rapidly changing needs and characteristics, shall be the determining factor in the formulation of a comprehensive program of religious instruction for the Christian Church. They are reflected in the Graded Courses of Study, the preparation and gradual introduction of which are revolutionizing the work of the modern church on its religious-educational side.

Graded courses of study demand graded organization and management, with an appropriate grouping of the pupils into grades and departments according to their attained age and relative degree of religious maturity. Of the departmental groups in the completely graded school the first is the Beginners' Department, which cares for the very little children during the first two or three years of their actual attendance at Sunday school, and before they are prepared to enter upon the more formal exercises of the first year class in the Primary. The Beginners' Department corresponds measurably to the kindergarten of the day school with its two years'

TO SUCH BELONGETH THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

preparatory training for the first school grade. It includes usually all children under six years of age, who are nevertheless old enough to be present, and to enjoy and participate in the simplest exercises conducive to their spiritual awakening and development. For teachers in organized Beginners' Departments in graded church schools, for teachers and workers with children of Beginners' age in every school, for parents and all who are in any wise responsible for the religious life and nurture of little children anywhere, this book, *The Beginners' Worker and Work*, is intended.

There is no sharp dividing line between infancy and this early period of childhood. Physical activity prompted by native impulse is still the predominating characteristic. This activity in little children is born of restlessness, because muscular action and bodily movement are as yet disconnected and not under full control. In children under six years of age instinctive feelings are strong though short-lived. The selfish instinct dominates, manifesting itself in various forms, among which a craving for recognition and approbation is noticeable. Imitation, curiosity, and a sense of rhythm are marked. The intellectual life moves upon the plane of concrete sense perceptions, supplemented by a fanciful imagination. The child is interested in things and persons, and in simple concrete situations or events. This indicates at once the method of approach for the parent and teacher in seeking to wisely shape the environment of the child in such a way as to facilitate the process of gradual unfolding.

The foundations of character are laid during this period in the formation of habits of politeness, prompt and cheerful obedience, and frankness and loyalty toward teacher and parent. By means of simple stories which, in their cumula-

TO SUCH BELONGETH THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

tive effect, represent life in its truer, nobler forms, the imagination may be guided into profitable channels. Correct example in speech and action, a gentle but firm authority, together with wise and constant suggestion, constitute the appropriate methods of control. By means of these also the foundations of a religious life must be laid. In story, song, and simple service of prayer and worship the little child may be led to think of the heavenly Father who loves and provides for all his earthly children.

Among all the laborers in the Master's vineyard none have a more responsible task and none a higher privilege than those intrusted with the religious care and nurture of little children, to whom by authority of the Master belongeth the kingdom of heaven.

HENRY H. MEYER.

Cincinnati, Ohio, March 1, 1917.

LESSON I

"CONSIDER HOW THEY GROW"

A YOUNG girl stood beside an old gardener. Tenderly he was caring for a plant that by and by was to put forth its blossoms. Near them was a lily, fair and tall in its beauty and its grace. The girl looked at the flower, then at the boxes of bulbs of many kinds that were before her on the shelf, and again at the gardener preparing fresh soil for the plant that needed strengthening. Suddenly she exclaimed: "How does it come to be? How do you know what to do?" This old gardener was noted for the beauty of his garden. "Ah!" he said, "you must watch, and watch and watch; bulbs are like children; they are all alike and yet all different. As I watch I find out what they need, and when I can't tell, those books help," and he nodded toward a pile of books lying on the shelf. "They tell what other people have found out."

Another thought sprang to the girl's mind, but she did not express it to the gardener. On her way home she pondered, "Bulbs are like children: yes, and children are like bulbs—all alike, yet all different. That is why we need to study them before we try to teach."

1. Growth is common to all life. "Children are like bulbs." Is that one reason why the Master told us to "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow"? (Matt. 6. 28.) Henry Drummond has said: "For the temporal life we have considered the lilies, but how is the spiritual life to grow? How are we to grow in grace? There is but one principle of growth both for the natural and spiritual, for animal and plant, for body and soul." We find out some things about children by doing as Jesus said and considering the lilies, *how they grow*.

2. Growth is gradual. Look at a sprouting acorn or a

narcissus bulb, or, if you please, at an oat set on cotton-batting over a glass of water where it can be easily watched, and see how it grows. It will not only grow larger but it will change. The change will come very gradually and often imperceptibly. Sometimes it seems as if there were a sudden bursting forth, but in reality there has been an invisible change going on for many days. Turn to your human plant and note that growth means more than difference in size. Other differences come so gradually that often they are not noted until some act reveals that the boy is not what he was last month. Human life develops on the same general plan as that of all life. Time is indispensable to spiritual growth as to any other. The gardener knows he cannot hasten growth, for if he does, there will be either lack of beauty or lack of strength. Hothouse forcing may bring brilliancy, but it soon passes. However, he expects change; there must be continual growth, even though it is not visible at once, and he waits, expecting.

3. Growth is progressive and orderly. We cannot have the bud before the leaf, the fruit before the blossom. Jesus said, "First the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4. 28). The good gardener has great patience; he rejoices in "the blade," but does not seek what does not belong to a particular time or period in the life of a plant. So must it be with the gardener of the human plant—the caretaker of the spiritual life of a little child. What "the blade" is in the Christian life—in other words, what little children ought to know and be and do religiously—will be discussed in lessons that follow.

4. Growth is from within. Study a seed, a bulb, or a bud and see what this means. There is an unfolding upward and outward, through the action of the inner principle of growth. This unfolding, as has been noted above, is gradual and regular. The strength within expresses itself, causing the change that is seen in plant or child.

5. Growth depends on self-activity. Think how the body grows. Is it not by self-activity? The simplest illustration, perhaps, is that of the baby's kicking its legs. Prevent

that, and the muscles will become weak and by and by all power will be gone; in other words, the life of the legs will be gone. Numerous illustrations from everyday life may be brought to mind of our using physical, mental, or moral strength and growing stronger thereby. "Nature develops all the powers of humanity by exercising them. They increase with use," writes Pestalozzi. "Mamma always lets me do that my own self," came amid sobs of four-year-old Louise, as her aunt, in taking her mother's place one evening sought to help with the necessary bedtime preparations. A happy time had been suddenly changed to one of disappointment, because the little one was eager to do everything in her power and the aunt was too eager to assist—not realizing how much a four-year-old *could do and would enjoy doing* for herself. Twenty years have gone by, but the aunt, then a young kindergartner, has never forgotten one of the best lessons in child study that she ever learned. "Let me help, mother," is the constant demand of the ever-active child, and this is not so much because he wants to help as because he wants a part in the doing. A five-year-old was supremely happy for a half hour because he had his piece of dough and a corner of the bread board to make his "loaf" while his mother made hers. Look for instances of this desire to be self-active shown by children three to six years of age, and record them. *Children develop by their self-activity.*

Can this desire to do things "my own self" and "to help" be met and made use of in Sunday school? Later lessons will show ways in which this may be done. If a child's activity is used in a good way, it will not be exercised in a bad way.

6. Growth is favored by right conditions. By right conditions we mean the right sort of environment. In thinking of a little child, environment must mean all that he comes in contact with; that which is immediately around him, both as to time and place, the things and the people in his home; and whatever he has to do with in nature. Note that it is said, "whatever he has *to do with*." There is much in general environment that he does not come in contact with, and that is

above and beyond his appreciation. If he goes to kindergarten and to Sunday school, these also form a part of his environment.

Right conditions are those helpful to right growth—those that will make a plant beautiful and strong, or, as we think of a child, those that will make him physically, mentally and morally strong. The work of the Sunday school teacher is to make such a religious environment that a pupil will grow morally and spiritually stronger week by week and year by year. "Go, wake the seeds of good that sleep throughout the world" (Browning), suggests the special work of the teacher of Beginners. The good is in the little child waiting to be waked up by the right environment. To environ—that is, to encircle, to encompass—is suggestive of what is to be done.

7. Growth proceeds by absorption. A young life takes from what is around it. First, the child absorbs from his environment; then he projects himself into his environment. By and by he becomes aggressive, acting upon it, and standing out more distinctively in the midst of it. Both the absorbing and the projecting take place during the years three to six. The aggressive phase comes later as the self develops.

What do we mean by "absorption"? A great many impressions come by way of the senses of sight, touch, and hearing; they have been called "avenues" to the mind. Eyes and ears quickly take in what is seen and heard. Evidence of this is found in a child's imitation of the acts and words of those around him. Beyond this direct imitation of single acts or of many acts there is an unconscious and general influence of his environment upon him. For example, if he is in an orderly house, he is more apt to absorb orderliness, that is, to have an orderly spirit, and not to show an irritability and restlessness often noticeable when children are in a disorderly place. Again, a child when associated with persons of cheerful temperament is likely to grow bright and sunny-tempered. He absorbs their spirit.

In absorbing, there is selection—an unconscious choice. Among the many things around him, a child takes one thing

in the sense of seeing, touching, hearing one thing rather than another, or more than another. In his choosing he "projects" himself and makes use of what is around him; that is, he touches two things, takes one to play with, and through playing discovers more than before; or, supposing he hears two songs; one of these he sings; he has not only absorbed by hearing, but by using the song he has projected himself and made it his own through singing it. As he becomes more "aggressive" he is more independent; in his play he combines things from out of his environment; he tells a story in his own way, he asserts himself over things, and tries to assert himself over people. As he realizes his power he becomes important in his own eyes, and "I did it," "Let *me* do that," are often heard.

Since the young child inevitably selects and absorbs from his environment, it is well to have much in the environment that is good and beautiful from which he may select.

"There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he looked upon, and received with wonder,
pity, love or dread,
That object he became.
And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain
part of the day, or for
Many years, or stretching cycles of years.
The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass, and white and red morning glories and white and
red clover; and the song of the phœbe bird,
And the third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter,
And the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard, or by the mire of the
pond side
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there
—and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads—all became
part of him."
(Walt Whitman.)

8. Growth aided by struggle. In all growth there must

be some struggle. An artificially perfect environment is not helpful because in it there is nothing left to do, no means by which the young spirit can grow, "‘let it lie,’ the vigorous youngster exclaims to his father, who is about to roll a piece of wood out of the boy’s way; ‘Let it lie; I can get over it.’ With difficulty, indeed, the boy gets over it the first time, but he has accomplished the feat by his own strength. Strength and courage have grown in him" (Froebel). Interest in effort and delight in overcoming are shown in the following illustration: "Herbert, aged four, was too fat to manage a certain gymnastic exercise with simple apparatus placed in the kindergarten he attended. But he tried again and again, until the other day he let out a shout of triumph. ‘I kin do it. Watch me!’" We need to remember, as Froebel says, that "As the plant grows *through its own vital power*, so also must human power become great through its own exercise and effort."

9. The Sunday school and growth. What significance has the fact of growth for our Sunday school work with Beginners? In this lesson we have considered some of the fundamental principles which condition growth. Just as the gardener must provide right conditions for the blade and the ear which are to come, so also must the teacher provide right conditions for spiritual growth, and aid it by observing these fundamental principles by which all growth is conditioned.

SUGGESTIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Describe the characteristics of growth mentioned in this lesson.

What law of growth did Jesus give us? (Mark 4. 28.)

What is the first influence of environment upon a child?

What is the second? The third?

Write in your notebook any instances you can discover of the child’s tendency to be self-active (observe children between three and six years of age).

LESSON II

PICTURES OF CHILD LIFE

SOMETIMES a picture makes clear certain points in a study that a student might miss altogether if it were not for seeing the picture. Its mission is to illustrate, that is, to give luster or light on that which may have been dark or mysterious. The observation of children, as suggested in the previous lesson, is most necessary to an understanding of child life, and it is this understanding that guides a teacher in discerning what is needed for growth. But what to observe and how to observe are not always easily determined. The word pictures or concrete illustrations given in this lesson are intended to help one to keen observation. These show tendencies that are common to all children, and that may be seen through their play, their actions, and their words at home and elsewhere. A child or a group of children on the street, in the home, or in the yard—anywhere—will reveal these and other tendencies to one who is seeking to learn what may be discovered.

1. The child investigates. Watch a child and see how in the first five years of his life he is investigating by testing the qualities of things and experimenting with them, and how this investigation goes on through the senses of sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste. Four-year-old Marion was visiting at an aunt's home the other day. For half an hour she sat on the floor perfectly absorbed with a little drawer in which were odds and ends that she could investigate; a tiny bottle with a stopper easily removed, a box of trinkets that could be examined, a bag of spools of silk of varied colors. She was not only absorbed with her environment but absorbing from it, because she was gaining ideas of many things. In playing with things a child is learning chiefly through his senses of sight and of touch. A group of a dozen children, varying from three and one half to five and one half years, were seated for

the first time around a kindergarten table. They were each given one of the kindergarten boxes of blocks. The younger children occupied themselves turning the blocks in and out of the box, while the older ones at once set themselves to representing the objects they had seen. What does this suggest to a teacher? •

The child is always eager to investigate. He wants to see into the closed box, to pull out what is inside. *What is inside?* is his constant question. *Curiosity is mental appetite; a hunger to see and to know.* This investigating tendency comes before and with representing and imitating, for curiosity is fed by doing and being the thing in which a child is interested. He watches the occupations of father and mother and wishes to share them. A child's delight in having a piece of dough to make a loaf was referred to in the last lesson; not only can he be self-active with material so easy to use, but he can do what mother does, and herein lies the charm. To make bread "like mother" shows the tendency to imitate, first with "make-believe" and later with real materials and tools. First comes the play motion of sweeping, then the toy broom, and then a real one; first comes an imaginary pounding, then a little hammer, and then a large one.

2. The child imitates. Children have a tendency to live the life around them so far as they can perceive it. Watch a little child for one day and see how many times he imitates, chiefly in the use of things and in ways of acting, but also in words and their application to special conditions. Tommy on being called to come, quickly responded, "I'se sorry, but I'se busy just now." Only that morning his mother had said, "I am sorry, but I am too busy to come just now." A child develops through his power to imitate. What will be the probable result if there is opportunity for imitating good expressions in action or in word? To the extent that a child represents anything, to that extent he becomes it for the time being. To him it is not "make-believe" but reality. He may be a person, a bird, a horse, or even a machine. One day "Billy" was a horse and as he pranced about the room, his father called

him by name, and the little fellow responded, "Don't call me Billy, call me Dick" (the name of a neighbor's horse).

3. **The child imagines.** By means of his imagination the child clothes *things with life*. A stick is a horse on which the boy rides; a cloth or shawl rolled up with a ribbon around "the neck" serves the girl for a doll. From two and a half to four and a half years of age one little girl was not happy without having in bed with her the top part of a bedstead post which to her was "dear dolly." Suddenly one day she threw it across the room, exclaiming, "'Tisn't dolly—it's a piece of wood!" The fancy or "make-believe" associated with things lasts longer with some children than with others, but when things are no longer personified with life, imaginary plays and mental pictures in the realm of fancy continue. Think of plays in which the imagination is active. If these are not familiar, it will be helpful to watch little children at play.

4. **The child fears and easily believes.** The imaginative tendency is often associated with two other tendencies evident in varying degrees and at different ages in different children; a tendency to fear and a tendency toward the mystical or, we may say, an interest in the mysterious. Who does not know of a child's being afraid of the dark, or of persons, or of animals? The little Louise who was eager to "do it my own self" (referred to in the first lesson) was heard to call night after night, when left in bed in the dark, "Mamma, doggie is here, doggie is in the room; please come take doggie away." This particular form of fear was induced, unfortunately, by a maid's story of dogs.

Confidence in a protecting power needs to be cultivated in connection with a feeling of mystery and wonder that is often mixed with faith. Fear has its good, it serves as a safeguard, but in a terrifying extreme it should be overcome by those who are helping and guiding a child. This becomes possible because a little one is naturally confiding and full of faith, and while he is imaginative, he also takes a thing just as it is told to him and believes what is said. It will be seen later that this has both advantages and disadvantages in training him.

The faith of a young child not only includes trust and self-belief but a *reaching out to the unseen*. To help the young child reach out and find God is one purpose of the Beginner teacher.

Madeline, not quite six years of age, of poetic and sensitive temperament, an artist in the making, whispered to her kindergarten teacher one day, "I have seen the fairies in the wood; won't you come to see them too?" Wonderingly, her companion went with the little girl through a stretch of woods till they came to a parting of the ways. There was a beautiful expectancy in her looks and withal a mysterious quietness of manner. "This is the way," said she, and on they went to a secluded nook. Without a word she looked about, an expression of disappointment crept into her face, and with quivering lips she said, "Why! they are not here to-day!"

The recognition of these and other easily observed tendencies of young children, and a knowledge of how to make use of them, is necessary in order that the teacher may effectively minister to the spiritual growth of young children.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Make a list of the five tendencies pictured here.

Tell what kind of things children like to do as suggested in the lesson.

What is curiosity?

What is the value of investigation?

What are some results of the imitative tendency?

LESSON III

SOME MEANINGS AND USES OF PLAY

PLAY is life to a child under six years of age. Without knowing his play we cannot understand him. It reveals the child to us. There is a meaning in his play for himself, in that through it he learns and grows. But we cannot dwell on that meaning in this lesson; the purpose is to see what his play teaches us about him.

1. **Three children at play.** To be sure of actual conditions and to show what may be rightly said of a child of this age, three days of play are reported. These need to be carefully studied in relation to what the children chose to do.

RICHARD'S DAY

A real day of a real boy, aged five, and living in the country.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Comments</i> (in relation to these plays and applying to all children of this age)
7 A. M.	Got up singing and continued to sing while he dressed himself.	a. Joyous expression. b. Doing for himself.
After Breakfast	He and Sister Barbara (aged three) played with large "paper dolls" (really cardboard, of baby size, with clothes to put on and off).	a. Desire to "live over" life at home. b. Boy cares for dolls (except when ridiculed, in this case by cousin whose parents have inculcated the notion of unmanliness). c. Parental instinct as true in boys as girls if not crushed out.

8:45	Went to woods to play in "camp" that father made for him out of pine boughs.	a. Desire to represent home life on simpler scale than house of-fers. b. Interest in nature. c. Interest in construction (just beginning).
9:15	Returned for Barbara.	Desire for companionship.
10:15	Brought Barbara home from "camp," took his cart and went to pine grove for chips for kindling.	Play for a purpose, just showing itself at five years. (Work is any-thing done for a result here is a mixture: the doing for the fun of it—play; the doing for what comes from it—work.)
11:00	Went with Grandma "down street" to get potatoes.	Same as above (chips for kindling; going for po-tatoes), with the inter-est of going somewhere with some one.
12:00	Made mud pies.	Easy medium for represen-tation and construction
After Dinner	Playing in barn with neighbor. More play-ing with cart and in mud.	Repetition.
4:00	Had to stay on couch because of quarreling. Played "b o m b," "pendulum" a n d "fish" with rope tied to soft ball.	a. Selfishly overriding sis-ter, teasing, etc. b. Imitating: representing things of motion (ac-tion). c. Imagination.
After Supper	Undressed h i m s e l f; teased Grandma to read a story, which she did. When in bed he and Barbara talked for "one solid hour."	a. Eager for story. b. Eager for expression.

NOTE.—Comment of mother: "I have not told him to do a thing; we never have time to superintend his play."

PHILIP'S DAY

Philip is not far from six years old.

7 — 7:30	"Raising Cain"—in bed.
7:30— 8:00	Getting dressed.
8:00	Breakfast.
9:00	Went on errand for mother.
9:10—10:00	Made sand pies in the cellar.
10:00—11:00	Expressed desire to go out of doors to play; changed mind and cleaned up woodbox in kitchen.
	Played with wheel-barrow.
	Brought in wood from shed to kitchen.
11:00—11:20	Watched mother cook.
11:20—11:45	Played in play-room upstairs.
11:45—12:00	Set table for lunch and other little things to help mother.
12:00— 1:00	Lunch.
1:00— 1:30	Had a "rough-tumble" time on couch after lunch; didn't know what to do with himself; kicked his feet high in the air; threw himself up and down on the couch; pounded pillows and finally decided he wanted to go out of doors to play.
1:30— 2:00	Wanted overshoes on; when out of doors started to bring in some wood.
2:00— 3:00	Played with his new Christmas horse and wagon; carried blocks from one room to another and built block houses.
3:00— 5:00	When Naomi (slightly older sister) came home from school, wanted to go out of doors to play with her.
	Played out until supper time.

Half the time he is singing to himself; the other half he is teasing some one to read one of his favorite books to him. Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* is one of these. Many times a day he says, "Won't you *please* read this to me when you've finished that?"

Compare these doings with those of Richard. What is more evident or less so, as regards activity, imagination, imitation, and representation? What similar interests are evident? Are there any more illustrations of "living over" in

play the life of the home? Any evidence of passing from simply imitative plays to real activities for a purpose?

DOROTHY'S DAY

Dorothy is four years old.

After breakfast she played with pad and pencil. Then, watching her mother prepare for baking, she also had bread dough which she molded and played at baking. After tiring of this she dusted the furniture. Shortly afterward, other children came in and all played tea party, in which small dishes were used. After dinner she skipped about to the music of a victrola. She is very active and always ready to skip and dance to music. She would have the victrola playing all the time, if it were permitted. She is also fond of singing and memorizes words and tunes. Later, she and her sister Katherine, seven years old, looked at a dictionary which has illustrations. Her favorite play is with dolls and doll carriage, in which she talks to her dolls as her mother talks to her. Our observation of her proves to us conclusively that she imitates, in so far as she is able, all of the things done by her mother and sister.

2. The teacher's use of play in Sunday school. It is often said, and truly, that because the life of a little child is a play life, the Sunday school should be a place of play. But that does not necessarily mean that it should be just like the week-day kindergarten nor have plays like those at home.

In studying the play of little children we discover certain characteristics that should be heeded on Sunday. First, the younger a child is, the more he turns to a variety of occupations. He is, we say, changeable; he does not attend to anything very long, even of his own choosing, and we find he has not the power to concentrate his interests. It is to be noted that he frequently goes back to the same play, repeating it many times even in one day, and every time he turns to it voluntarily his interest deepens in it. Consequently, both in arranging the Beginners' Program and in teaching a given lesson we should make provision for variety and repetition.

A young child is impulsive, "acting on the moment." Watch him with his blocks; he builds and knocks them down. When somewhat older he completes his building, but quickly changes it to something else. When still older, at about five or six years of age, he begins to use the completed building; that is, he has a purpose in the making, and uses it when it is made. When this characteristic becomes manifest it is time to plan for purposeful occupation. Before this, it is sufficient to let him do things for the unconscious values which attach to the doing. Now, at special seasons, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, the teacher should provide opportunities for the making of simple gifts for others.

During the earlier years, at three or four, and sometimes even at five, the child's play is immediate, just for the present, so what is then done within the Sunday school must have a present value for him. It should be an enjoyable occupation. To the child it may seem to be done merely for the sake of the doing. He knows nothing of its purpose. He takes part in it for the sake of getting the experience. But while it is play to him, it is nevertheless of religious value. This the teacher should understand. She should work purposefully, realizing its values in the child's spiritual development.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Make a chart of Philip's day on a similar plan to that made of Richard's day, giving comments on his play.

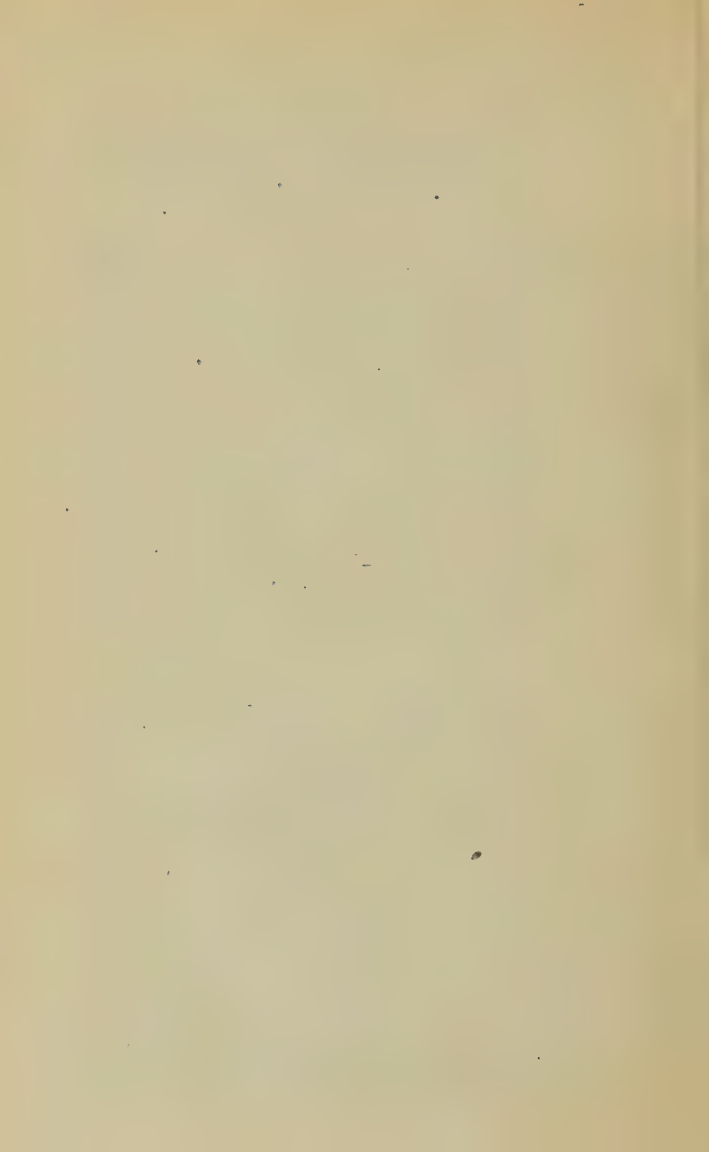
Study Dorothy's occupations and note whether they show similar tendencies to those of the boys. If so, make a note of them.

What have you learned about child life in studying the plays of these three children?

What else have you learned from original observations of children in play?

Note some practical suggestions concerning the use of play in Sunday school.

What additional suggestions can you make concerning the use of play in Sunday school?



LESSON IV

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF A LITTLE CHILD

EVERY little child has religious tendencies. His religion is only in its beginnings. It is so unlike what we adults often think of as religion that some may fail to recognize it as such. But when we study the little child we find he has characteristics which are a part of all religious life.

I. The dependence and trust of the little child. From his earliest days a child turns for protection, for help, and for satisfaction to some one greater and more able than himself. If he hurts himself, he runs to mother; if he is afraid, he clings to her, and mother soothes and comforts him. If father carries the little fellow over what to him is a strange way, he feels perfectly safe, and the arms go around father's neck, with satisfaction in the strength of one bigger than himself. In the same way, when questioning begins, he turns to father and mother, believing that they can satisfy and tell him what he is eager to know. The sense of dependence, though it may not be consciously realized, develops into a trust in the one who gives the needed shelter and comfort and help. Through this sense of dependence children are led to trust the heavenly Father.

Look again at the young child: he is running over with joy; constantly he manifests it in his play. It is indicative of that love of life which is the essence of religious aspiration and hope. The joy of little children is a part of their religious life.

Write in your notebook any ways that occur to you by which a teacher of Beginners can make use of this sense of dependence, this trust, and this joy to make more real the beginnings of the religious life. Different ways will be illustrated in several of the following lessons. You may later compare your own notes with the statements of the textbook.

2. **The little child's hungers.** Once more, we find the little child hungry with many kinds of hunger. He is hungry to know; that is the instinct or the hunger of curiosity, and he is, therefore, questioning, saying, "What is this?" or "What is that?" He is hungry for cooperation and companionship: note his delight in somebody's playing with him. He is hungry for love and sympathy. Johnnie hurt his finger and ran to his father; the busy man responded, "I can't help it," and the little fellow said, "But you might say, 'O.'" We often speak of the faith of a little child and most commonly think of that confiding trust that is so often manifest, or of the credulity that believes so readily: these are two phases of faith. There is also a hunger of faith that reaches for something beyond oneself. A young child is seeking, seeking, seeking. Professor Sully has called him "a serious searcher" and says: "The world, to him, is a sort of big house where everything has been made by somebody, or at least fetched from somewhere." And this seeking leads to a faith in the Unseen, to the making real of the unreal by means of an active imagination. These hungers also are the beginning of religious life in the little child. *Religion is not something simply to be taught: it grows from within.* Religious life is living day by day, progressing, moving forward.

3. **Good and evil tendencies.** In every little child there are tendencies to good and tendencies to evil. No one is altogether good nor altogether bad. There is a religious impulse in every child that may grow into right desire or may be undeveloped and die out. In speaking of little children Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of God." Did he mean simply that there were such in heaven? Rather, he meant that little children really belong to the Kingdom. Dr. Coe calls attention to the fact that the word used in the original language indicates possession, and adds: "There is a distinction between the state of little children and that of mature and willful sinners. The latter must repent and be converted; but children, *already possessing the life principle of the Kingdom*, require spiritual development. That is, every child is God's child and

has a tendency to grow more and more like him if trained in the right way. Good and evil impulses mix in every child, yet not good and evil in any complete sense. Greed and anger that would be reprehensible in us bear no such character in an infant." "‘No such character’"; that is precisely it. Character is a confirmed habit of moral choice, and this the young child has not yet attained. He is neither good nor bad, he is merely becoming one or the other. Some of his impulses, if they grow unchecked and unregulated, will issue in bad character; others, if they grow symmetrically, will result in good character.

4. Religious life depends on nurture. "He is becoming one or the other." Here is the great opportunity for teachers. The religious life depends on nurture. It must be tended, nourished, guided. Seeds of sympathy, kindness, and affection spring up very early, but these depend for growth on a right environment. Said Froebel, "Faith in God is innate in every child; it has only to be awakened in the right way, but it must be awakened or it remains dead." Bushnell has said, "A child should grow up a Christian and never know himself otherwise." This is not possible without nurture. But with the right kind of care from the beginning, it is most likely. Failure is due to a lack of understanding and of nurture on the part of parents and teachers. An illustration will show the effect of nurture: Tony stood at the door of a mission kindergarten of Bohemian children. There was no place for another child and she could not be invited in. But the sunshine of the kindergarten had its attracting power, and morning after morning saw Tony waiting and watching. The face of the child, on which was a miserable—yes, awful—scowl telling of unhappiness and anger, rarely to be seen even on the face of an adult, together with the persistence of its owner, made an unusual situation and a "place for one more" was found. For weeks Tony sat in that "sunshine" of order, gentleness, and happiness, refusing to do anything, pushing away every offer of help from teachers and children. When the latter spoke to her in the language she understood, there was no response

except an angry movement. Still Tony came, and occupations were placed before her. Suddenly, one day she picked up a sewing card and needle. The whole story cannot be told, but gradually she joined in play and work, and—one day a smile came. Five months went by and Tony was the most polite, the sweetest and gentlest of the kindergarten group; she was the favorite of all and a little mother to the younger ones. And *the scowl was gone*. The hard, unnatural covering had been broken through, the seed had been nurtured and a beautiful blossom had come! It was Tony who said, when the children were on a train going for a picnic, "O, Miss Helen, I wish I could sit on the grass all day."

The influence of a Beginners' Department should be, and in many instances is, similar to that of Tony's kindergarten. Changes that are a result of training in either place can be most plainly seen through extreme cases. In Sunday school they are proportionately slower and less discernible than in kindergarten because of the difference in time and opportunity. But a brief story of "Mike" will show that the same training is possible there. This rough little fellow had seen more of the dark side of life in the first five years than do most children. When he was brought into the Beginners' Department one Sunday he was dirty and uncouth. The first thing necessary was to wash his face and hands. He was asked to come the next Sunday clean and with brushed hair. But when he showed his face at the door the following week there was no less dirt. The teacher welcomed him, glad that he had cared to come again, and the necessary "first thing" was repeated. A note to the mother brought a slight improvement the next time, but for some weeks Mike's condition varied, until one Sunday he came so dirty that the teacher told him he could not sit with the other children and she could not keep on taking time to clean him. This made an impression. At the end of six months the old Mike could hardly have been found. The outer cleanliness was a sign too of an inner change. Mike was the opposite of Tony in that on the first day he was active, but the activity was a hindrance to the other children and of

little good to himself: he was noisy, irresponsible, mean in his mischief, and disobedient; often he had to leave the circle, and once he had to sit outside the room for punishment. The first real interest he showed was in the picture of a dog who had helped its master, and in the story of a boy's help to the dog when it was lamed. Weeks went by and Mike's actions showed little change, but one Sunday, after repeated lessons on being kind, he came bringing a box to the teacher. Inside was found an injured sparrow, and the child who had been rough and mean said, "*Can't y'er make it well?*" Pity, sympathy, and gentleness had been awakened! Another Sunday came, and Mike was heard to say, "Sure, I does now what the piano says to do." Perhaps the way might be long between obeying the call of the piano and the commands of God, but a *beginning* had been made.

We need to think of what results from the failure to cultivate right feelings and of the danger of not conserving emotions of tenderness and sympathy. In a sermon on the hardening of the heart, and with a reference to the awful cruelties perpetrated by the Turks in the Great War, Dr. William C. Gordon strikingly says: "Who are the men who are responsible for these worse than fiendish deeds? How are such acts possible to creatures in human form? I suppose that if you and I, years ago, could have stood by these men when they were infants and looked into their innocent faces, they would have seemed to us just like other children of the same age. We should not have seen in them any unusual marks of depravity. We should not have noted in those baby faces any prophecy of the crimes with which their hands have been stained in these later years. As babies they smiled and cried, and cooed and chuckled, just like other children. They had in them the same possibilities of good and evil. The explanation of the deeds at which our souls revolt is not found in the infant face. Somewhere between infancy and manhood there is an explanation of this awful change. As they passed down through the years from boyhood to youth and manhood there was an exclusion of the influences that purify and

ennoble and redeem the life, there was a hardening of the hearts of those who had in them the same possibilities of good and evil which we and all men possess."

Think again: "A child should grow up a Christian and never know himself otherwise"—a Christian from the beginning, but not a mature Christian; the two are so different. Think of what one should be as compared with the other. At first the difference seems only one of degree, as we think of reverence, love, trust, right living, a quantitative difference. But, looking a little deeper, we may see that as in combining different quantities of material things, a different quality results, so in things spiritual the combining of different degrees will make a qualitative difference. The boy is not a miniature man; the Christian child is not a miniature Christian; he is a Christian in the making. Note the word "grow." The religious life grows as all other life grows—by activity and nourishment. There must be right conditions, food, and action. It was not until Tony responded and did something that any change came. In Sunday school we must provide opportunities for children to do what is right, to obey, to show care for others, each to take care of himself, to be helpful. Various ways of doing this are shown in the later studies. We must also satisfy their sense of need and dependence by a connection with and a joy in the loving heavenly Father. How this may be begun will be suggested in the next lesson.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Write down in your notebook the different characteristics mentioned of the *beginning* of the religious life of a little child.

As regards goodness and badness, what is true of every child?

Write down the words of Bushnell as given in the lesson.

On what does this condition (referred to by him) depend?

For what changes should a teacher of Beginners look?

LESSON V

HOW TO FIRST TEACH ABOUT GOD AND JESUS

How shall we first teach a child about God? Let us assume that as yet he knows nothing of God. He is to be brought naturally and definitely into relation with him.

1. God as Heavenly Father. The little child's first knowledge of love and care and strength comes through his experience with father and mother. It is because of their love that he loves. In this little soul is the possibility of response to their expression of affection. Unconsciously he realizes their love by what they do. The earthly father is the embodiment of strength and the mother of tenderness to the little one, and in them he finds protection, sympathy, and wisdom. The combined authority and love are often a child's first God. This may be realized by the words of one little fellow who said, "I do not need to pray to-night. Father is going to sleep with me." And by the prayer of another: "You need not be here to-night. Mother has come back." Therefore it is through father and mother love that we may bring God near to the understanding of a little child. Through his relation to father and mother we may teach him of God as heavenly Father. We cannot make him love God. We can only inspire him with a desire to love. Sometimes children are told that "we ought to love God." That may be true, but no "ought" will awaken such a feeling. Accordingly, in our lessons we teach the child of the heavenly Father's love and care.

2. God as the Giver of good gifts. One of the little child's interests is in nature. A recognition of the invisible comes through the visible. Wonder, reverence, and gratitude may be aroused for the beautiful things all around him—the sunbeam dancing on the wall, the sprouting acorn, the lovely dress of the baby flower, and the colored stone picked up on the street. We direct his attention to these and other things

and say, "A great good Father gives us all these things to make us glad. They are his good gifts to us." Then we teach him, "Every good gift cometh from the Father"; "Give thanks unto the Lord (or Father), for he is good."

Children's imagination and credulity lead them to believe in the unseen, as we have found. They accept with a faith that is often more real than that of older persons. A suggestion may lead farther than we think, for

"Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image, and the silent joy;
Words are but underagents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest strength
They do not breathe among them."

(Wordsworth.)

So let us not lay too much stress on the necessity of their talking about God. Little children have not yet learned how to use words as an apt expression of their inner life, and yet they are near to God. Wordsworth gives us a thought of a child's nearness to God, as he says in speaking to him:

"If thou appearest untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine.
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worshipest at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not."

What do the references to "Abraham's bosom" and the "temple's inner shrine" signify?

One of the best ways to lead to a recognition of God, and to calm a child's fear of the darkness, is to suggest God's watchful care. The following lines bring this thought very beautifully.

"Sleep sweetly, birdie, never fear,
For God is always watching near.
And you, dear friendly world above,
The same One holds us in his love,

Both you so great and I so small
 Are safe—He sees the sparrow's fall,
 The dear God watches over all."

(Last lines of "The Child and the World," In the
 Story Hour, by K. D. Wiggin.)

How, then, shall we first teach about God? We may summarize what we have said above in this way: We may teach of the heavenly Father's love through lessons showing parental love and care and through securing from the child a recognition and response. This makes God's fatherhood very real to him. It is important whenever we speak of God to refer to him in a natural way as our great, good Father. It is, of course, of first importance that God shall seem near and real to the teacher, that she shall recognize his presence by her spirit of reverence and by acts of devotion, and that she shall recognize also that for the little child words about God are not so important as a feeling of his presence.

3. Jesus as God's Son. Children are often confused as they first hear of God and Jesus. Unnecessary difficulties are raised in their little minds. It was only the other day that a child said, "Mother, are there two Gods?" and the mother seemed puzzled to know what to say. When a teacher of Beginners took a new class she found by their answers that there was small distinction in their minds between God and Jesus, and even between these and Abraham and Moses! They were all good men and "in the Bible." Stories and characters had been presented in such a way that no wonder the little ones were confused. A distinction may be emphasized by telling of the great Father before any mention is made of Jesus Christ.

If a child has come to know something of God as the Father of all, it is most simple to tell, at an opportune time, how the Father in heaven wanted to let every one know that he loved them. He wanted to tell them what he would like them to be and do, and to send some one to help all his children. So he sent his own Son, who was so like his Father that people knew

more about the Father's love than they had ever known before. At another time we might tell how Jesus, for that was the name God gave to his Son, came as a little baby on the first Christmas day. He came to the house of a dear good mother who was called Mary, and grew up as her little boy. When people saw this baby they knew how beautiful and loving all babies might be. They were so happy that Jesus had come that they said to each other, "A loving child is on the earth." When he grew to be a boy, and later to be a strong man, he went about doing good. People looked at his face and they learned of God's love. They heard him talking and they found out what the Father above wanted them to do. On another day it will be very natural to tell how Jesus called little children to him, how the mothers crowded round him with their babies in their arms, and some of his friends thought the children would bother him. But Jesus saw them and said, "Let the little children come." Later on, other stories of what Jesus did and said will show how he came to be the Saviour of all. It will be well to remember that Jesus himself told us to pray to the Father, and that nowhere in the Bible are we told to pray to Jesus, but to "ask in his name." If this distinction is made it will be a help in our first teaching of God and of Jesus.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

How does a child first experience love and care?

What is the best way to help little children to a real feeling of God?

How may a distinction be made in first teaching of God and Jesus?

How shall we first acquaint the children with Jesus?

LESSON VI

THE FIRST RELIGIOUS TRAINING

CAN a four-year-old be trained in reverence, gratitude, and obedience? Are these too large words to use in relation to him?

Have you seen Tommie look up to the stars and "wonder what they are" as he listens to the story of the Song of the Stars? or have you watched a boy like Robert as he saw the blue stone crystals clinging to a string (which string he had seen set in a jar of a solution of blue stone the day before) and heard him whisper, "How did they get up there?" And have you ever noticed three-year-old Alice tenderly holding "a baby" that was only a sprouting seed? There was wonder in those faces—and something more. There was mystery—and something more. It was almost adoration. And these are all parts of the flower of reverence. It is well for children to feel some things and not to understand. There may be a feeling, an appreciation, before there is an intellectual comprehension. Also, it is quite possible to be reverent without being solemn—that is not natural to little children.

1. First steps in reverence. If there is to be reverence by and by in the full sense of the word, there must be *respect for things* now. To let a child ruthlessly destroy anything—that is, for example, to tear a flower to pieces—is to lose an opportunity for cultivating the seed of reverence, if not positively to inculcate irreverence. Who can think of a reverent character in adult life which is also destructive? To train to a careful handling will tend to bring out a reverent feeling and attitude. Little beginnings are responsible for the great results of the future. "Oaks from little acorns grow." Mary, aged four, was in an atmosphere of respect, for every one in her home gave grandma the first or the best place, because she was

grandma. It was beautiful to see this little girl run to open the door, or stand aside to "let grandma get in to the carriage first." Reverence for the aged is sometimes missing at fifteen because it has been passed by at five.

In an earlier lesson it was said, "Fear has its good." It is in this way. It is well for children to bow down to some one. "Love has not only cast out fear, but also reverence, veneration, and even respect," because the casting out of fear has gone to the extreme. Fear is one of the instincts implanted in every human spirit. To some degree it is necessary for safeguarding life; for a child to fear fire is a good thing; beyond that it may prove harmful or helpful; that depends on whether fear is changed to terror or to reverence. Teachers may help to overcome unnecessary and hurtful fear through the telling of a story showing protection or one showing confidence, also by an attitude of trust incidentally shown and in the praying of a prayer such as the following:

"Be near us, our Father; we ask thee to stay
Close by us forever, and help us, we pray;
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there."

They may encourage fear that is wholesome by their own reverent way with things and persons, and by such training as that suggested above.

2. First steps in gratitude. Appreciation of something nice given by some one is the beginning of a grateful feeling. Children quickly respond to the idea that is back of "Thank you," if it is associated with a thing given. But there is no use in telling them that "we ought to be thankful" or that "we should thank God" without arousing a feeling of gladness in his kindness and goodness that will lead them to want to say "Thank you." Then the act of giving thanks will deepen the feeling of appreciation. In first cultivating this feeling it is best to begin in relation to father and mother and the good things at home. Objects from home and conversation about

these will open the way,¹ and verses like the following will be helpful:

“Loving mother, kind and true;
Busy father, he works too,
Earns the money for our clothes,
Buys the goods that mother sews.
Mother gives her daily care
Washing faces, combing hair,
Darning stockings, patching too,
Many things for me, for you.

“Father’s money buys our food,
Mother cooks it sweet and good.
They both work from morn till night
Just to keep our homes so bright,
Just to give us daily bread,
Nice warm fire and restful bed.
When we grow up tall and strong,
We can then help them along.”²

It is quite natural and easy to pass from the help and the gifts of father and mother to those of the heavenly Father. There are some things that father and mother cannot give. One mother made her little one conscious of the “great, good Friend in the skies” by reference every now and then to things he had given, as for instance, “I am glad you have such sharp eyes—the Good Friend gave them to you”; and before teaching any prayer she sought for some spontaneous expression. One day, after a few words of this kind, the little fellow ran to the window and she heard him say, “I thank you, Good Friend.” Incidental references in Sunday school are often worth more in the training of a grateful feeling than any direct lesson or story. The spirit (not the words) of the following lines may be developed both for overcoming troublesome fear and for making the little ones glad:

¹ See Object Lessons for The Cradle Roll, by Frances W. Danielson.

² Tune may be found in Songs and Hymns for the Sunday School. (Clayton F. Summy Co.) Price 25 cents.

"Like a cradle rocking, rocking,
Silent, peaceful, to and fro,
Like a mother's sweet looks dropping
On the little face below,
Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,
Jarless, noiseless, safe and slow;
Falls the light of God's face bending
Down and watching us below."

Children and young people of to-day often seem lacking in a warm appreciative sense that leads to gratitude. But the beauty of this characteristic cannot be overestimated. A picture comes to mind of a dear old grandmother as she sat at her window, crippled and almost blind. Her face with its furrows told of storms and struggles passed and over all shone the sunlight of contentment. Every one who saw this face spoke of its beauty and its cheer. Those who were nearest to her knew something of the secret of its gladness and its peace. She had gained a grateful spirit that was very rare. The slightest token of friendly love was received with a "You do too much for me," or "It is very good of you," and the smallest service rendered was always met with "Thank-y dear." The one hundred and third psalm seemed personified in her; she enacted it day by day. Of course such a spirit grows out of the experience of the years; it is the ripened fruit, but the seed in the hearts of little children must be cared for so that there may be fruitage by and by. Froebel tell us that the seed of gratitude will be awakened by training the child in giving care. Only thus will he appreciate the care given to him. "To care for things is to become careful, to tend things is to grow tender," says Drummond. "Likewise, to do deeds which merit gratitude is the way to learn to be grateful," says Susan Blow. Is there any way in Sunday school in which little children may show care and deserve a "Thank-you"? This seed will be nourished also through the cultivation of this spirit in ourselves: the teacher who has a joyous grateful feeling will influence the children till such feeling stirs in them.

3. **First steps in obedience.** Religious training must also provide first steps in obedience. This may be done through the cultivation of an obedient way of doing things, a willing yielding to what we all do. "The clock says come," and we all come; "the clock says stop" and we all stop. Is not obedience suggested in

"Swing, swong! this is the way
Goes the pendulum night and day.
'Tick! tock! tick! tock!'
Never resting, says the clock;
'Time for work and time for fun.
Time to sleep when day is done.
Tick! tock!' Hear the clock!
'Time to rest each little head;
Time the children were in bed.'

"Swing, swong! sure and slow
Goes the pendulum to and fro.
'Tick! tock! tick! tock!'
In the morning says the clock:
'Time to wake from slumber sweet,
Time to wash and time to eat.
Tick! tock!' Hear the clock
'Tick, tock, tock,' it cries,
'Children, it is time to rise!'"

(Emily Huntington Miller.)

Order is "Heaven's first law"; it is obedience—the fulfilling of rules. "A willingness to abide by rules is the first, the indispensable condition of moral growth. Now the habit of yielding to rules may be implanted in a child even in the cradle" (Felix Adler).

4. **Roots of Christian living.** Why in treating of first religious training do we think especially of the cultivation of reverence, gratitude, and obedience? They are foundation stones, or, better still, roots of Christian living; they are

virtues from which others spring. Without them there can be no religious life. Can we imagine a religious person who is irreverent, or a Christian who is unthankful? Love is the center of all Christian life, and out of gratitude and reverence come love and devotion.

5. Moral training in the Sunday school. This training, which should be begun in the home, is to be continued in the Sunday school. The teacher of Beginners in Sunday school has a great opportunity to supplement the training of the home. This is not only her opportunity; it is her business. For the sake of training in obedience she will practice orderliness and promptness with the children. She will seek willing, happy fulfillment of what she herself thinks of as a few rules for the best interests of the group, and which the children think of as "things which we all do." For it is more important to gain a spirit of obedience than it is to teach any words about obeying—even obeying God. She will not, therefore, pass by direct disobedience unnoticed and allow it to continue. In order to cultivate reverence the teacher of Beginners will have the little ones careful in handling things; natural objects such as plants and flowers, seeds and shells, and the Bible. She will be herself reverent in action. Reverence in prayer and in song will be sought in ways that will be shown in later lessons. Stories will also be found in which there is readiness to obey and a glad spirit of thanksgiving. The teacher will lead the children to express thanks as occasions arise calling for such expression. We shall see too that through observations of nature they may be trained to obedience, reverence, and gratitude.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

How would you, as a teacher, first train in reverence?

What is the first thing to do in developing gratitude?

Name a first step toward a habit of obedience.

Why should a teacher of Beginners seek to develop these three virtues?

LESSON VII

THE MOTHERLY TEACHER

"I FORGET and call you mamma," said a little girl to her teacher one day, as in kindergarten she asked, "Mamma, may I do that?" What higher compliment could be given? Perhaps it came simply from force of habit, but the "forgetting" would hardly have come if there had not been some motherly characteristic unconsciously felt. A small boy struck the keynote when—at another time—he said: "Wasn't it funny, I called you mother? But you act like it anyhow." There was not an exact likeness in the little fellow's mind, but a recognition of similar qualities. "Like *it*" instead of *her*, perhaps meant *a* mother. The words "teacher," "class," "school" might be well banished from the Beginners' Department. Think of the children as forming a family group, with one guiding them who is like a mother. The very word we use, "kindergarten"—"child garden"—has in it a beautiful suggestion, and a child-gardener who cares for, nurtures, and trains the human plants of this garden must have the mother spirit. If it seems something beyond some of us, it only waits development.

1. The mother spirit. What is the mother spirit? Of course we must think of the real mother at her best, in answering this question, not of a mother who may have little of the true mother spirit. In a picture of the real mother we see sympathy that comes from an understanding of her little one, that leads him to turn to her in every time of trouble, that prompted one little fellow to say to his comrade in play, who hurt himself, "Run to my mother, quick; she will make it well." Mother love shows itself in so many ways—sympathy, tenderness, protection, firmness, and even seeming hardness. Love

does not mean sentimentalism, and tenderness does not, of necessity, mean caressing. Teachers are tempted, sometimes, to "darling" their little children so much, that the common word "gushing" may best suggest this objectionable extreme of manner and of word. The affected and superficial is harmful, and children quickly detect a sham. A mother's tenderness shows itself to the ugly, the deformed, even the weak-minded child. Mother love will not be partial toward the pretty and the most attractive. Think of "Tony" as told of in Lesson IV, and remember that the ugly in spirit *needs* the greater love. There is a capacity for goodness, for loveliness in *every* little child. A mother has great faith in possibilities. Love includes protection and to protect from harm—"to keep from the evil that is in the world"—may mean the giving of a hard experience. Control for a child's good, firmness even to punishment, are a part of love, and sympathy may be wrapped up in punishment, for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

2. **A godmother.** Every good mother is a godmother, for it is mother who first reveals God. In a memorial address of unusual beauty one minister has told it to us thus: "I want to say with all reverence, but with all emphasis, that mother revealed God to me. Is not that what your mother did for you? Is not that what mothers are doing for children to-day? There is a time in a child's life, and often that time is not brief, when he learns more of God through the life and love and teaching of his mother than he learns through the Bible, or even through the personality of Jesus. Through his mother he approaches and begins to apprehend and grasp the sublime message of the Bible and of Christ. The teachings of religion had seemed more or less remote from my life, until I learned that God is like mother. That is the truth presented to us by the ancient prophet in the words, 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.' The mother who is patient and kind and true and forgiving and loving is a new incarnation of the God who possesses all these virtues and every other in infinite measure." Whittier tells us:

"The dear Lord's best interpreters
Are humble human souls;
The Gospel of a life like hers
Is more than books or scrolls."

"It is by faith in its mother that the child rises to faith in God." The original conception of a godmother as adopted by the Episcopal Church has in it a significance of beauty and of value. Should she not do in a religious relationship what a mother does in an all-around relationship? Now, suppose that in any church, the teacher of children who are *beginning* to know God, should take this character of godmother and fill it full of all spiritual meaning, even though the mere form is cast away. There are mothers to-day who do not, and others who cannot, give the moral training their children need. To these the motherly teacher will prove a double blessing.

3. The ideal made real. In every young girl the mother spirit waits development. Think of the most beautiful mother you know. Study the great pictures of ideal motherhood—the wonderful Madonnas—as far as possible. Of what do they speak? It has been said that "the copy of the Sistine Madonna hanging upon the wall, asks the woman who placed it there to realize in herself this glorious type of motherhood." Go then to the little children, and remember that as "They stood together in a fragrant garden, Love held the child by the hand and looked down into its face with a tenderness so deep that it held in its heart the compassion, the sacrifice, the passionate yearning of universal motherhood," for "two things Love learned in heaven—infinite tenderness and perfect loyalty to truth." Go also with the faith that makes faithful, for mother love never tires. There are so many *little* things that mothers have to do! And as child-gardeners the things that we can do seem so little—the results so long in coming! *But*—"It is not for him who sits at this end of yon telegraph line, and with deft and diligent fingers transmits the message into its electric veins, to anxiously stop and query whether it will ever

reach its destination, and to wonder who is to receive and transcribe it upon its arrival. That is not his business. The management is adequate to that work. Other minds and hands will attend to that. It is for him faithfully to transmit. So, it is not for us to query the efficiency of these small acts; the saving power of those lowly graces; the daily, hourly messages of humble faithfulness. It is only for us to transmit: the Infinite will receive the dispatches." After longing, loving, studying, and being faithful, *this* shall be your reward—the ideal of the godmother shall be real to you and in you. It is not always the pretty teacher that attracts little children; they do not care for externals as do older children. It is the one of loving sympathy, and of bright smiles, even with a plain face and a quiet manner, that wins a little one's confidence and love.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Write down the characteristics of an ideal mother.

How may the Sunday school teacher be a true godmother?

LESSON VIII

THE LITTLE CHILD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL A HOME

A MOTHERLY teacher and a family group of little children need a place as homelike as possible in which to gather. A room that is schoolish in character is undesirable. A corner for the Beginners' class in a room with the rest of the Sunday school is unsuitable. Environment counts for much with any children, but especially so with little ones. Can you think of any reason for this, from previous study? Do children absorb somewhat as plants do? If you think so, give illustrations from the life of both. Have you ever watched the effect on children of certain surroundings, good or bad? If the nurture of the religious life is the aim in teaching Beginners, then the *place* where this life may grow is a part of those "right conditions," referred to in an earlier lesson. We will think, first, of the best room for the purpose; second, of a poor room that may be adapted to meet the needs as nearly as possible; and, third, of what can be done in case there is no separate room for Beginners.

1. **A desirable room.** Imagine a group of thirty children seated in a circle in a room twenty-two by thirty feet. A carpet of soft-toned colors is on the floor and the chairs are of three sizes so that, as little legs vary very much in length, all feet may reach the floor, and their owners, whether tall or short, may sit comfortably. At either end of the room are two tables (each two and one half by seven feet) so placed that sometimes they form an oblong five by seven feet and again an L, when fifteen children are to be seated at them. A single table is convenient when only a few little ones are present. Between the circle and the tables is a broad space sufficient for marching. The windows are high, letting in the best light, but are also low enough for a child to reach the sills when standing in a chair, and on these sills are window

boxes of flowers which the children tend. On the sides of the windows are cream-colored curtains, with a border design of green, so hung that they do not obstruct the light. A good system of ventilation and heating keeps the air fresh and moderately warm. The walls are tinted a gray-green, a restful color for the eyes, and a good background for the two or three beautiful pictures, hanging quite low for the children to see them well. All these things help to make a homelike room. Everything has a purpose for the spiritual welfare of these small people. Nothing should be done simply for decoration or artistic effect. The latter, of course, should be considered, for what is beautiful is helpful, and anything inartistic should not be chosen. But nothing must be in a Beginners' room just because it is beautiful. From the standpoint of art a thing may be right; from an educational standpoint it may be all wrong for the particular place and use. The plane of the child must be remembered: a picture beautiful in itself might not be so for little children; and to have a room so well furnished and complete that its very conveniences hinder the helpful activities of the children takes away its beauty. Seek to find the spiritual good in what has been and will be described. On one side wall of this room is a low strip of blackboard that in color is dark green, for the use of teachers and children. On one Sunday this may have a picture of a hill, a stream and some cattle nearby, or some other simple scene of home life in relation to the story of the day. Another week it might be used for the children's drawings.

A piano is so placed that a group of children can gather around it as they might at home. At one end of the room is a group of large chairs; this is the "Visitors' Corner," to which they invite their fathers and mothers. There are two closets—one for the teacher's needs, and to this the little ones do not usually go, and one for the materials, to some of which they can help themselves when there is need. Can you think of any good to the children in having one place open to them and not the other? A hat and coat room, together with a toilet closet, can be entered from the large room. Not only hooks for

wraps are here, but little boxes for rubbers, etc., so arranged that they serve for stools as well. Is this any advantage in the training of the children? The Beginners' room is in a corner of the church building on which the sun shines through the morning, and it has an entrance from out of doors that is quite distinct from the rest of the school.

2. How to adapt a room. The larger number of teachers cannot have to-day such a room as that described above for work with Beginners. What, then, can be done? Find the best room available and transform it to meet the needs as far as possible. If it is a dark room, perhaps the church trustees can be persuaded to have a window cut to let in more light and air. If there is no system of ventilation, or it works poorly, it is quite possible to make one by raising the windows six to ten inches, and placing a board in front of the open space so that there will be a current of air passing in without a draught. *This is most important.* To attempt to get a response, or to expect to do good spiritually, or even to have good order in a room filled with bad air is almost useless and is really harmful. If it is dirty or untidy, the first thing a teacher had better do is to turn janitor, for human plants will not grow in such an environment. If the walls are dark or ugly, they may be lightened or made attractive by gray, light soft green, or pale buff cloth coverings on the lower half to serve as a background for pictures, or for the children's hand-work. If there is any unattractive thing standing in the room that cannot be moved away, like an unused stove or a pipe, a screen set in front of it and used for cards, pictures, or anything relating to the work will have a more cheery effect than, for instance, a rusty furnace pipe! Pictures, etc., can be so fastened as to be easily removed and replaced by others as occasion demands. In order to get money for these materials, or for curtains, or a closet, or anything needed to make a homelike, attractive room, and to do the work well, one of several ways may be chosen. If the Sunday school has a proper expense fund, a certain amount may be obtained from that. If not, one thing may be sought at a time, and the par-

ents be asked to contribute for this purpose. Or, one month's offerings out of each quarter may be devoted to these needs until the room is what it should be. One basement room was much improved by the earnest effort of the teacher and her girl assistants, who made candy and saved the proceeds of the sales for this purpose. There is always some good way of doing a thing, if the need is felt strongly enough. In another school one of the teachers undertook to see the parents of sixty children, and their contributions, plus that of personal friends, provided a much-needed piano for the department. In a mission school parents paid for chairs of the right size, each for one for his own child, and by doing this they became more interested in the work.

3. When a separate room is not available. Think now of a church where there is no room to be used by Beginners—in fact, where there is only the church auditorium or one room for the entire school. Perhaps there are only three, six, or twelve children from three to six years of age in the school. In that case screen off a corner with a window for this little group where at least they can have a story and a prayer, if not a song, by themselves. A screen can be made with less expense than to buy one. Possibly a carpenter in the church, or a manual school student, will make a gift of his work. The material of plain colored denim or lining to put on the frame, can be had for twelve or fifteen cents per yard; this, and the wood for a screen of four divisions, six feet high, would probably cost less than three dollars. If chairs of the right size *cannot* be bought, it is better to have stools than large chairs, and the children can kneel and use either stools or chairs for table when one is needed. Pictures can be fastened to the screen, or hung, by hooks, on a string that is run along the wall and fastened to it at each end. If the school is crowded for room, it may be possible to obtain the use of a home parlor in a neighboring house. If this were carefully arranged for, it would serve better than the church corner, for the children would have more freedom and would not be disturbed by the noise of other classes. In a New

England town was seen recently a group of twenty little ones thus gathered in the parsonage, by the minister's wife. In the summer the porch of church or house might be used; or, if there were no porch, the Beginners' group might well meet occasionally on the lawn for an out-of-door Sunday school or kindergarten. The only objection to having the group away from the church building is that in the minds of the little ones there is no connection with the church. In schoolrooms where crowded conditions prevail the Beginners' may meet at the hour of the church service or at some other period when the older children are not present.

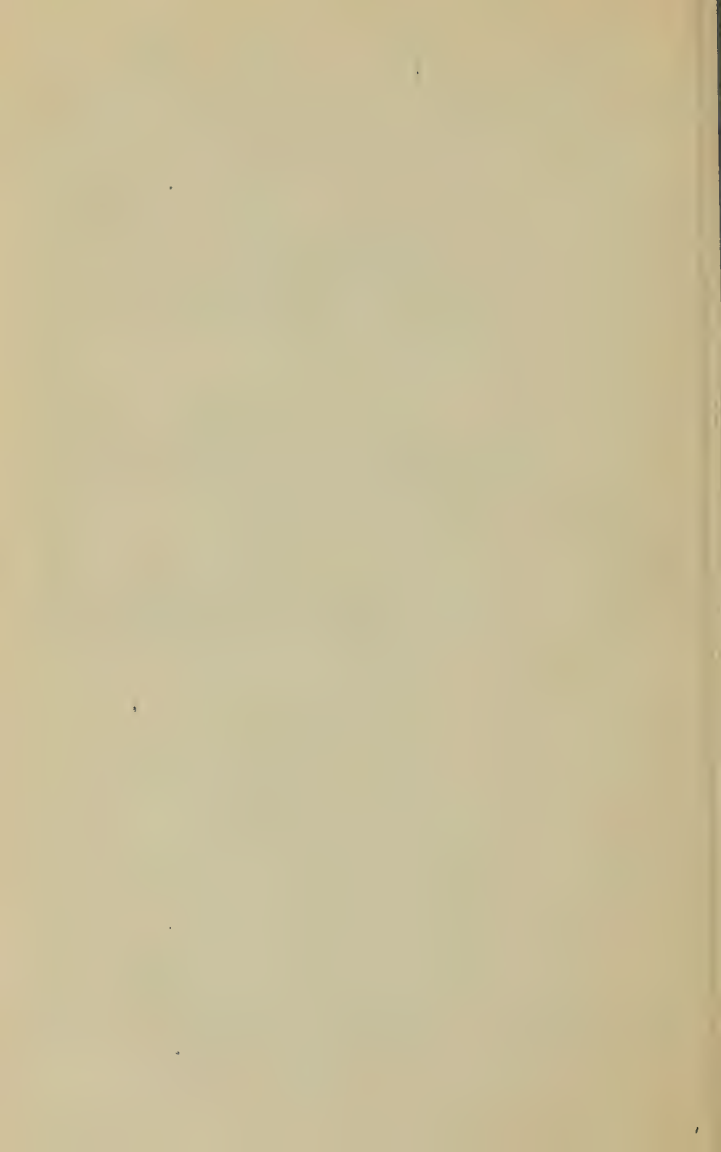
QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Why is it important to have a suitable and a homelike room?

Name important points for a teacher to consider in regard to windows, walls, and ventilation.

How would you, as teacher, seek to improve a dark, untidy, barren sort of place?

What value is there, besides that of a material result, in having the cooperation of the parents in an effort to improve a room.



LESSON IX

TYPICAL PLANS FOR THE BEGINNERS' SESSION

It was once said that a kindergartner who did not have a plan was a very poor one, but a kindergartner who always kept to her plan was far worse. This is as true of a Sunday school teacher of Beginners. A plan is necessary for any successful work, but to hold to it rigidly, especially with little children, is altogether wrong.

1. General aim for the Beginners' Department. There should not be only a plan for a single Sunday, but for a month and a season, in which certain things should be especially thought of and sought for. For instance, on beginning to teach in the autumn it is most fitting to make Thanksgiving the underlying thought of all that is done, first, because the season and the home surroundings offer good opportunity for this development; second, because we need to train children in giving thanks; and, third, because the coming religious festival is a part of a little child's experience. By affording him opportunities to give care, he may be led through the weeks to some expression of thanks. This is the excellent aim of the first part of the Beginners' course of the International Graded Lessons. After thinking of father and mother care in various ways, illustrations follow of the heavenly Father's care and of his good gifts, until at Thanksgiving Day all that is around the child is suggestive of thanks. It is only the teacher who sees the end from the beginning, who thinks of what September's stories will lead up to in November; the children, of course, know only the immediate story of the day.

Underlying the aim of the special season the teacher should have a larger aim which will be determinative in all that she does. Such an aim is supplied in the International Graded Lessons, Beginners' Course:

"To lead the little child to the Father." This aim is to be realized by helping him:

1. "To know God, the heavenly Father, who loves him, provides for, and protects him.
2. "To know Jesus, the Son of God, who became a little child, who went about doing good, and who is the friend and Saviour of little children.
3. "To know about the heavenly home.
4. "To distinguish between right and wrong.
5. "To show his love for God by working with him and for others."

For a more comprehensive and complete statement of the aims of a Beginners' Department see the Standard for a Beginners' Department (Appendix, page 155).

2. Plans for the Beginners' session. In making plans for the session of her own department the teacher should consider her own group and see what can be best done with it. It will be remembered that in Lesson I of these studies it was suggested that as "bulbs are all different, so children are all different." In some things there is universal likeness, but others vary with the individual child and group. So the best of plans must be adapted to the particular group. The songs, pictures, and prayers used should be related to the story of the particular day, or to the plan for the season as it develops little by little. These, therefore, need to be selected carefully for the particular day, and an estimate made of what may be wisely used in one month and again in three months. There should be no set program or "order of exercises" to be used Sunday after Sunday. It will be well to plan little variations, and also to be prepared to change the plan made if the response of the children, or the lack of it, or some other good reason calls for change. For instance, the weather might be such that it would be especially appropriate to sing about the snow—perhaps a child would ask to do so, if the leader did not propose it—and in such a case it might be well to set aside the song previously planned

for. Notice the "might"; it would not be well always to do this, for a valuable part of a larger plan might be thus continually broken into.

3. Three typical plans. Three typical plans for single Sundays and different seasons will be outlined here, to show what is good for a Beginners' Department, and how a leader may outline a plan for a Beginners' session.

At this age, memorization, either of Bible verses or of songs, should be accomplished without direct drill. This may be done through their frequent use by the leader in story and in conversation. Things come before words in a child's interest, and the learning of words should be largely reserved for the Primary and Junior periods. What is said in the Teacher's Text Book of the Beginners' Course of the International Graded Lessons is quoted here as rightly applying to any good work of this kind with little children: "The Bible verses for the children are chosen for their simple statement of the truth taught, and are not given as mere memory work, but simply to be used often by the teacher, so that they shall sink into the children's minds and unconsciously become their possession."

In making a program it is necessary to judge of the amount of time that its different parts will take and to see that the total will fill the allotted time. It is estimated that the following programs will fill one hour, though in one case there are ten items, in another fifteen. Above all things, in work with Beginners spontaneity and freedom are desirable. For this reason some danger attends the putting into printed form of any program or plan for a Beginners' session. The manner of development of a program in a particular session cannot be indicated in print. In actual practice the teacher should be guided by the children's response. She should permit conversation and free activity, and under no circumstances should she look upon a printed program as an inflexible guide. It is, of course, to be understood that the Beginners' session for which these plans are suggested makes provision for Beginners only, and that it includes all Beginners, with the

possible exception of the Cradle Class of three-year-old children. For the best use of these plans it is almost necessary to have a separate Beginners' room.

PLAN I

Subject: The Heavenly Father's Care for Birds and Animals.

(Lesson 3, First Year, Beginners' Course. International Graded Lessons.)

Truth to be shown: God's tender care.

Bible verse: "Your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt. 6. 26).

1. Music Prelude.

(1) A tune from Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words"; or

(2) Tune of new song, "I asked the joyous little Bird" (in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School).

2. Goodmorning Song.

a. "Good morning to our Sunday school
And to our teachers dear;
Good morning to the many friends
We always meet with here."

(Tune in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.)¹

b. Greeting to one another.

3. Church Bells (Three children in center of circle ringing church bells. All stand and sing:)

"Come! Come! people come!
This is the bell's message to me, to you,
'Come! Come! All may come,
Fathers, and mothers and children, too.'"²

4. Prayer Hymn (heads bowed).

¹ Words by Frederica Beard. Tune by M. R. Hofer.

² "Church Bells," by Mildred J. Hill in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"Father of all, in heaven above,
We thank thee for thy love.
Our food, our homes, and all we wear,
Tell of thy loving care."¹

5. Offering: pictures of birds for scrapbook for sick child (last lesson was about birds). Children, one by one, carry these to small table in center of circle. (They should set these previously under chairs to be out of the way while singing and praying.)
6. Story (in two parts; for Part I see Graded Lessons as noted above): "Circle Talk."
7. a. Song sung by leader of children.

"I asked the little joyous bird
Who taught him how to fly
And sing such pretty songs
In the bright blue morning sky.
And he told me it was God
Who had given to him his wing,
And taught him how to build his nest
And taught him how to sing."

(Tune in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.)

b. Groups of children go to the piano to sing the song.

8. Story--Part II, including Bible verse. (Graded Lesson as above.)
9. Prayer.

"Father, thou who carest for smallest tiny flowers,
And teachest bees and squirrels to save for winter hours,
To thee, we little children, our loving thanks would bring
For all thy loving-kindness, of all thy goodness sing."²

(Tune in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.)

Or—

¹"Thanks for Daily Blessings," by M. J. Hill, in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

²"God's Care of All Things," by M. J. Hill.

"Father, we thank thee for taking care of the birds and the squirrels and all the animals. Amen."

(Said very softly after the leader.)

10. Good-by Song.

"Good-by to all, 'Tis time, we know,
For little children home to go,
Good-by to all, Good-by to all,
O, may we, till again we meet,
Be kind and loving, brave and sweet!
Good-by to all, Good-by to all,
To all, good-by."¹

PLAN 2

For Easter Day

Subject: Jesus and the Heavenly Home.

(Lesson 27, Second Year, Beginners' Course, International Graded Lessons.)

Truth to be shown: The happy home where Jesus and other friends have gone.

Bible verse: "I go to prepare a place for you."

1. Music, "Easter Bells."
2. A word of good-morning greeting and a little conversation about Easter Day as a day when we have flowers and music to tell of gladness.
3. Offering of flowers brought by children "for those who are sick," one blossom each, suggested the previous Sunday.
4. Half a dozen children select one flower each, and then all together say,
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come.
5. The ringing of Easter bells (by the arm movements of the children) to the music of "Easter Bells."

¹"Good-by Song," in Songs for Little People.

(Tune in Folder of Story 27, International Graded Lessons, Berean Beginners' Stories, Second Year.)

6. Singing the words of

"Easter bells! Easter bells!
 Ringing from the steeple tall!
Easter bells! Easter bells!
 We are coming at your call.
Ding, dong, ding, dong,
Ding, dong, ding, dong,
Easter bells! Easter bells!
 Ringing from the steeple."

NOTE.—If there are no bells and no steeple where a certain group go to Sunday school, then substitute the following:

"The little flowers came from the ground,
 At Easter time, at Easter time,
They raised their heads and looked around
 At happy Easter time.
And then each little bud did say,
'Good people, bless this holy day,
For Christ is risen, the angels say,
This holy, holy Easter day.'"¹

In some cases it will be best to make the following adaptation of the last two lines:

"'For God is love,' the angels say
 This happy, happy Easter Day."

7. Prayer: "We thank thee, our Father, for the flowers, the music and all the nice things that tell of thy love for us. Amen."

8. Story: The story found in the Teacher's Textbook of the Graded Lessons, Beginners' Course, ending by showing:

9. Picture of Hofmann's "Christ."

¹ "Easter Song," by Eleanor Smith, in *Songs for Little People*.

10. Song: "Jesus, Friend of Little Children," in Songs for Little People.¹
11. Prayer: "Dear Father: we are glad there is a beautiful home where Jesus is. Amen."

NOTE.—In some Sunday schools it would be well to let each child paste on cardboard a copy of the above picture to take home as an Easter card, and to have already lettered (below where the picture would be mounted) the words, "I go to prepare a place for you." If the International Graded Lesson folder in which is this picture occurs is used, and it is thought better to have a different one, Plockhorst's "Walk to Emmaus" may be substituted and the above words used.

PLAN 3

This is a plan for a Sunday in early spring.

Subject: The gift of the sunshine.

Truth to be shown: Kindness: to be illustrated by

- a. God's gift of the bright spring sun.
- b. What the sun does for the sleeping seeds.

Bible verses: "A pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun" (Eccl. 11. 7).

"He maketh the sun to rise" (Matt. 5. 45).

1. Music Prelude. (Bright, "sunshiny" music or something quieting, according to the mood of the children.)
2. Good-morning greeting. (By shaking hands with the leader.)
3. Good-morning to the sunshine. (Use a prismatic glass to call in the sunbeams on the wall, if the sun shines through the Sunday school windows.)
4. A three-minute talk about "God sends the bright spring sun to melt the ice and snow."
5. Piano plays this story with "a choir" of children near by

¹"Jesus Friend of Little Children." Words by Walter J. Matham, tune adapted from J. H. Maunder.

and all the rest singing la, la. (Tune in Songs for Little People.)¹

6. Reading from the Bible. "He maketh his sun to rise."

7. Offering. Coins dropped one by one in a basket in center of circle, also birthday offering—if there has been a birthday—and 'birthday prayer: We thank thee, our Father, that _____ has a birthday; may he be happy and loving to-day.

8. Leader singing to Children:

"When I'm softly sleeping in the early morn
Through my window creeping the sunbeams come new born.
They gently say good morning, then with golden light
Peeping through my window make my room so bright."²

9. Some little children, including the birthday child, may be sunbeams going to shine in the dark corners of the room.

10. Another "story" from the Bible: "A pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

11. Repeat "God sends the bright spring sun." (All stand.)

12. Story of the Golden Fairies bringing Gifts to the Baby Violet. See Lesson XVI, page 99 for this story.

13. Reference to offering: "Shall we give our offering to help make a baby happy? Suggestion as to buying milk, and money placed in empty milk jar.

14. Prayer: Our Father, we thank thee for the sun. Help us to be bright like sunbeams.

15. Marching and saying good-by to leader, at the door.

NOTE.—If the day were cloudy, it would not be wise to use the above plan as a whole. Substitute the following song for parts 3, 4, 5, and 6, and adapt the rest as necessary. The thought of the rain and sunshine as gifts of the Father is quite possible on one day, and the contrast of the sun shining

¹ "God Sends His Bright Spring Sun." Words by Elizabeth Peabody, tune by Eleanor Smith.

² In Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

after the darkness will make the latter part of the plan usable.

Instead of "God Sends the Bright Spring Sun" use

"God, our Father, made the night,
Made the moon and stars so bright,
All the clouds far, far away,
The shining sun and golden day."

(Tune in Song Stories for the Sunday School.)¹

Either with the other Bible verses, or in place of the first one, use "He causeth to come down for you the rain." Joel 2. 23.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What is the value, in the first plan, of the music prelude? In this plan there is a double purpose. By turning back to Lesson 7 one purpose may be brought to mind. Suggest the other if you can.

2. There is a threefold value in having the song and representation of the church bells; what is it?

3. Why should an offering of bird pictures be suggested instead of the giving of money by these little people?

4. Which is the simpler of the two prayers that are given at the end of the plan?

5. Why is it better, in the second plan, to tell about Jesus and the heavenly home than to tell about the resurrection?

6. Why is it well to tell little children something about this home?

7. In how many ways might the children be active in the carrying out of the third plan?

8. Why is the offering put in at one place in the program and its use talked of later in the hour?

¹ "God's Love," by P. S. and M. J. Hill. Tune arranged from Mozart.

LESSON X

SOME PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

FOUR-YEAR-OLD Bobbie came home from Sunday school, and at the dinner table his father said, "Well, 'Sonnie,' what did you learn to-day?" Bobbie looked up but had nothing to say. "What! did not the teacher tell you anything?" The little head nodded, but there was no audible response. "I guess you had better not go to Sunday school if you can't learn anything." And the little head hung low.

In another home were another father and another four-year-old Beginner. This father was heard to say: "I don't care what my boy learns in words. Words don't count. I am going to watch. If Billy is more ready to do what mother says, if he is more gentle with grandma, and nicer to Betty in the kitchen, if he seems glad for the good things he has, and wants to say 'Thank you' with us at the table, I shall know that through Sunday school and home we are gaining something." A child may repeat words, he may "know" them, so far as being able to say them is concerned, but if there is no appreciation of what those words mean, they will not make him any better even though they are the best and truest that can be found. A little one often likes to repeat some saying because of its rhythmical sound, or because of the desire to jabber of something as a verbal imitation, though it has no sense to him. As a verbal exercise this may be a great accomplishment; beyond that it is worth very little.

I. Knowledge through experience. The giving of knowledge, in the sense of giving facts and imparting information, is of small importance in teaching little children. To help them to know, in the sense of experiencing some truth, is of great value. We know that with ourselves actual experience makes understanding more real and complete. If I walk down a street, I know it better than if I only hear about it.

One's knowledge would, of course, be very limited if it were confined to individual experience. But we need to remember that all knowledge has come through some one's experience, our own or some one else's, directly or indirectly, and with a little child his own experience is the most natural starting point. He must see and touch and *come in contact with* what he is to know, because "the senses are the avenues to the mind." A six-year-old illustrated this experimental knowing when he said, "*I know* one thing in the Bible is true!—'It is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun.'" Just what experiences a child under six years usually has, and how these can be used in giving him more truth will be studied in later lessons.

2. The cultivation of right feeling. But there is something even more important than the teaching of truth, and far more important than the knowledge of facts. It is the cultivation of right feeling. A teacher of Beginners had been telling a part of the story of Abraham. Right in the midst of the story, when she might have touched the feeling of the children by telling of the gladness of the father and mother when the baby came, and how they thanked God for his promise and the gift, she stopped and said, "Now, children, what was the name of the father? of the mother? and of the boy?" And when the little ones hesitated on any name, she repeated it and said, "Now, we will all say it together," and added, "We will have the rest of the story next Sunday." Cold facts! What did names signify as compared with a beautiful picture of family love? And the story was left without a satisfactory ending, because the time had been wasted. Through story, song, and prayer we need to cultivate the right sort of feeling, and especially to call forth feelings of reverence, of gratitude, and of joy—then to seek expression of these in other actions. It may be by all uniting in doing something for the Beginners' room, or by little acts of service done individually for each other, or for the teachers; it may be by the doing of something at home, through a suggestion made in Sunday school, or for some

one who is sick. The tiniest acts are worth thinking of for tiny people to do—perhaps just fetching something from table or closet. *By the action the feeling grows.*

“Through song and prayer,” we said. A little child prays, and *through the act* of praying he *feels* that God is near. He sings a joyous song, and he feels more joy than before. He makes a gentle, gracious bow, and a feeling of respect grows within him. With this thought in mind the smallest acts planned for in Sunday school become important as a part of a child’s religious training. Everything that is done should tend to the cultivation of a feeling in favor of rightness, even before he has a definite appreciation of what is right and what is wrong.

3. Direction of action. A young child has been said to be “a bundle of feelings” full of smiles and full of tears. Note how quickly he passes from one to the other; how soon, also, his affection is transformed. He cries over the loss of a friend, but soon laughs over the coming of another. He clings to one person to-day, but is satisfied with another to-morrow. This is evident in his play with dolls as well as people, at the age of three or four years. A group of children were in tears on saying good-by to a kindergarten teacher; the next week they were perfectly happy with the new one who had taken her place. Why is this? It was said in an earlier lesson that a child of this age lives in the present. As he grows older, past and future have an increasing interest. He acts on the impulse of the moment, and our care must be that his impulses go out in the right direction. Turn back to Lesson I and III and see what has been said about self-activity. It must be used. If not directed into good channels, it will run into bad ones. Let a child do everything he can in Sunday school instead of doing it for him. Give him an opportunity to make an effort both for himself and for others. If a chair is to be brought forward, ask some child to bring it. If pictures or papers are to be distributed, let one or two do that. If materials are to be passed, or song books to be fetched, look to the children for help. They may

assist in many things which it might not be wise for them to undertake alone, such as watering plants, or filling a vase with water.

4. Guiding good instincts. We often say we do a thing "instinctively." That means there is a certain tendency within us that makes us act that way, for example, to run or jump when frightened. Fear is an instinct, and the act associated with it, running or jumping, is the result of that instinct. Young children are governed by their instincts more than are older people. Some instincts die out by and by, others develop into habits, and some are controlled by the will of a person, so that instinct does not have so much power as it did in our early days. In the moral and religious training of little children we need to remember that they do act by instinct, that some instincts are good and some are bad, and that the good may supplant the bad if *they are brought into action*. These, then, become habits, and those that are objectionable die out from lack of use. What may we do about this in Sunday school training? Two or three illustrations will show. There is the instinct of self-activity. The desire to do things may die out, or it may turn to destructive acts, or it may develop into a habit of helpfulness. Froebel says: "Be cautious, be careful and thoughtful at this point, O parents! You can here at one blow destroy, at least for a long time, the instinct of formative activity in your children, if you repel their help as childish, useless, of little avail or even as a hindrance." There is the instinct of fear, and also the instinct of the young to run to their mothers for protection, seen in animals as well as children. What is hurtful in fear may be overcome by strengthening the feeling of security, so that confidence may be established. Some of the stories of the International Graded Lessons are chosen with this need in mind, for example, the series under the title "The Heavenly Father's Care." There is the instinct of self-possession (that is, of getting for oneself). It may grow into selfishness and greed, or it may develop into a true consideration of the rights of ownership, of respect for one's

own property and that of other people. Before a child can distinguish clearly between "thine" and "mine" he must appreciate "mine"; that is, he must possess and take care of things of his own. So with Beginners in Sunday school, as at home or in kindergarten, it is well to emphasize "*my* chair," "*my* place," "*my* clothes hook," and anything that a child may look upon as his own. Self-interest comes before interest in others, and as a child realizes that some things are his and some belong to other people, he may be led to share with others. Later—at the Primary Department age—will come naturally an emphasis on honesty and not taking what belongs to other people.

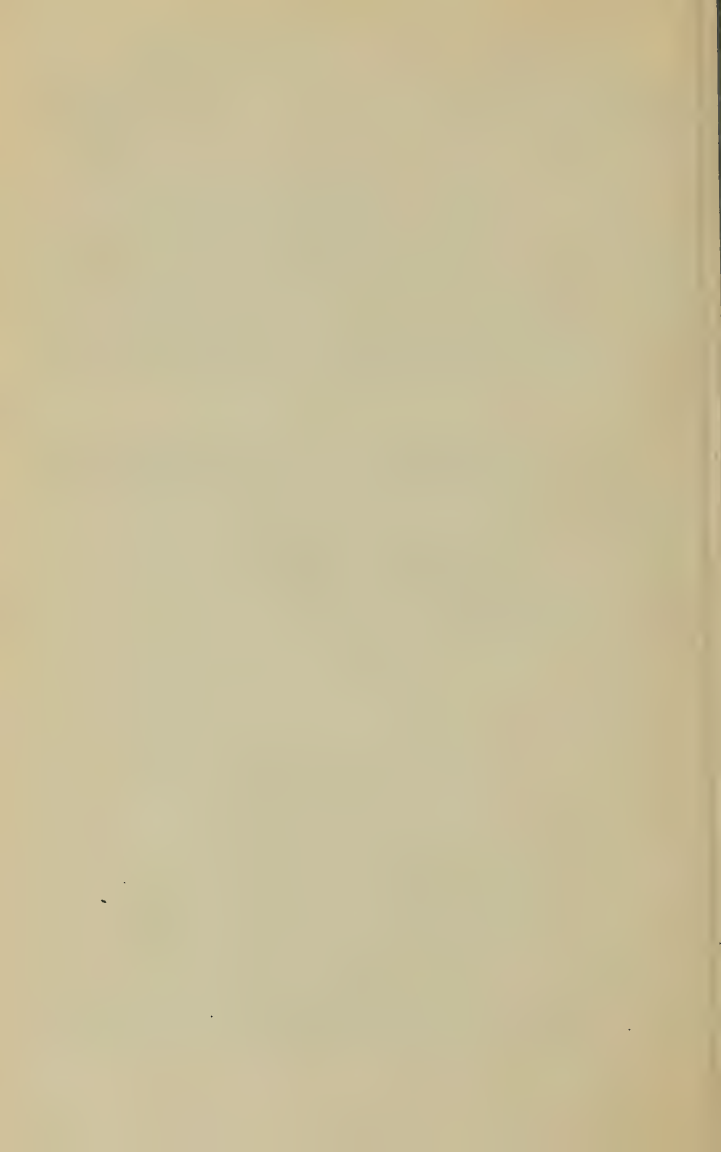
QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Name four things that a teacher of Beginners should do in teaching.

Which of these is the most important?

Give an illustration of the difference between knowing a fact and experiencing a truth.

How may training affect instinct?



LESSON XI

GUIDES FOR TEACHING

ONCE there were two teachers; each wished to bring help to her children through a celebration of Thanksgiving Day. It was naturally a part of their lives, and here was an opportunity for the cultivation of a thankful spirit. One teacher began with stories of the harvest time, the gathering in of potatoes, apples, and other good things familiar to the little ones. She told also of the squirrels and the bees preparing for winter, and how God had taught the birds what to do. She then told of a mother and how she prepared clothes for her little ones, so that they should be warm and comfortable. Every now and then during the weeks before Thanksgiving, she said, "Shall we say 'Thank you' to God?" and they did.

The other teacher told of the Pilgrims coming to this country and about the Dutch and the dikes in Holland, and then of the first Thanksgiving Day, and lastly, of how we keep the day somewhat as they did. Which of the two came nearest to the child's everyday life? Has history any value to a little one under six years of age? He lives in the present both as to time and place. Were both teachers equally cultivating a grateful feeling? Which one was giving knowledge and making that her chief aim? Which one was using facts just for the sake of revealing truth?

1. The point of contact. If three things are remembered in teaching young children, the work will be much easier and much better than it sometimes proves to be. One of these has been called "the point of contact." When that term is used, most teachers think at once of a little classic in Sunday school literature, *The Point of Contact in Teaching*, by Patterson Du Bois.

The point of contact means that by which a story or subject may be related to experiences a child has already had. It

must be a description or a story of that which is familiar to him; it must refer to things that have already gained his interest, so that the new grows out of what is already known. *To take what is of interest and through it cultivate right feeling, or give an insight into truth, is one secret of all good teaching.* In the illustration given above, Thanksgiving Day was a good point of contact. In what the first teacher did there were several other points of contact, for she began with the fruit and vegetables in the children's homes and in the store of which they knew. Supposing she had talked of apples to children who had never had them, or to city children of cutting the grain, of which they knew nothing, there would have been no contact in these things. The biblical illustrations of sheep and shepherd are useless in lands where sheep have never been known. Missionaries have had to substitute something that would be appreciated by these people and would convey the same idea that Jesus's references to sheep and shepherd gave to the people of Palestine. Patterson Du Bois gives in the book named above a number of stories showing a child's plane of experience, and at the end of one quotes the following, which makes clear the same truth as that of the Thanksgiving illustration: "To the high-school girl the sidewalks were laid on the ground; to the child the ground was hidden under the sidewalks. His first experience with earth was not the underlying ground, but the overlying sidewalks. She had vainly thought to begin at the beginning of God's works, instead of the real beginning of knowledge—getting the 'point of contact' with the world." When we stop to think how much a child learns in the first three or four years of life we shall not speak slightly of it, but when we realize also how little knowledge one of this age can have compared to an adult, our teaching will be much simpler than it is apt to be. Investigations have been made proving that children on entering school are often ignorant of much that is ordinary knowledge in later life; for example, that milk comes from cows, or that wood comes from trees; the size of animals,

or the growth of fruit. Many children have an idea that a cow is no larger than its picture, and one little girl assured the writer that "it was *so* big," measuring with her hands the length of a kitten! What must be their imagination about many things that are told them from the Bible! Telling about much of which they cannot rightly imagine is one great reason for the erroneous religious notions that are so often evident, and for the amusing and puzzling questions asked by children. If our teaching were more simple and many things were withheld until a later time, the little ones would be saved from confusion, and their parents and teachers saved from difficulties. *One great essential need for a teacher of Beginners is to get down to the plane of a Beginner*, to see from his viewpoint, and then she will have a point of contact.

2. Keep within the small circle of experience. Here is a child with his small circle of experience. We are apt to add another circle, and another, instead of working within the first. We forget that new ideas can only grow out of old, that new impressions must be linked up with earlier impressions. As Weigle says: "If we could just put our own ideas unchanged into a pupil's head, teaching would be a very simple thing. But that we cannot do. We can only present words and things, and the pupil must understand them in his own way and from them construct his own ideas. What meaning does he get? What ideas does he form?—these are the vital questions in every day's work." There are things done with Beginners, especially when they are placed with older children in Sunday school, that require a discrimination, association, and concentration of attention impossible to pupils of Beginners' age. Pictures are shown of subjects that are as distinct from the comprehension of the pupil as is "the dipper" in the sky; verses are memorized that might as well be in a foreign language, for the words used are foreign to them. Therefore, in making plans, choose that which is nearest and simplest to a child. Subjects which are of value later on often lose their power for good when made

familiar before the fullness of time. Having a subject both near and simple (such as Thanksgiving Day), seek to find that which is essential in it, that which will appeal to child life and that touches the active rather than the passive side.

3. Use the positive. A third guiding principle in good teaching is, Use the positive rather than the negative. Present and emphasize the good, planning ways in which this good may actually be done without suggesting that which is bad that should not be done. A mother told her four-year-old son not to go across the street to the blacksmith's. He had not thought of doing so, but having the suggestion, he immediately went when mother was not looking! There will be times for saying, "Do not do this," but it will be when the children have done the especial wrong act once or we know they are tempted to do it. *Do not introduce evil of which little children know nothing.* Here is one great reason for not teaching the Ten Commandments to Beginners. What do children under six years know of stealing and killing? They do not need to be told, "Thou shalt not steal"; "Thou shalt not kill." Before even "Thou shalt not lie" is taught, the positive command is needed, "Speak ye the truth." The spirit of this—that is, the sense or feeling of truth—should be given to the Beginner, and later, when he is in the Primary grade, the words should be taught. In the beginning let us picture what is true and beautiful and good, that our children may grow that way.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

What do you understand by the term "the point of contact"?

Give an illustration of positive teaching; of negative.

Why should not the Ten Commandments be taught to Beginners?

Name a good commandment to give to a child of five years of age.

LESSON XII

THE PLAY SPIRIT

PLAY is the life of a little child. We must not then shut it out of Sunday school. But what is play? Is it running and jumping, is it using sand and blocks or participating in a bird play like that found in the so-called kindergarten games? It may be one or all of these, but there may be play without any of them. It is just the joyous expression in any interest that occupies the moment, without any thought of a result from such occupation. So singing a song or looking at a picture may be play. Just as soon as the song is repeated that "we may learn it," or a picture is looked at "so as to remember the story," the play spirit has gone. There is nothing wrong in this in itself, but with little children it should have a very small place. Learning the song and remembering the story are secondary matters. The joyous participation in song, story, and prayer cultivates right feeling, and so it is worth much, irrespective of any conscious acquisition on the part of the child. To be content to do that which is sufficient unto the day, the immediate time, is a great lesson for the teacher of Beginners to learn. She should look into the future in making plans, in the sense of planning beyond the single day for a gradual development, but in all she does with the children she should live in the present and share the play spirit with them. And she should never do a thing for the sake of the future if it does not also meet the need of the day.

1. **What the play spirit includes.** Joy and liberty are the great characteristics of play. Doing for the sake of doing signifies enjoyment and freedom. If children are conscious of restraint, joy and liberty, and consequently play, are lost. That does not mean that there should not be a wise hand of control over them. Note that Horace Bushnell says: "Play

is the symbol and interpreter of liberty, that is, Christian liberty. . . . Play wants no motive but play; and so true goodness when it is ripe in the soul and is become a complete inspiration there, will ask no motive but to be good. Therefore, God has purposely set the beginning of the natural life in a mood that foreshadows the last and highest chapter of immortal character."¹ In other words, the playful spirit, with its exuberance of joy and its delight in freedom, is indicative of that love of life which is the essence of religious aspiration and hope. Perhaps Jesus had these characteristics of child life in mind when he told us to become like little children, for his ideal for his disciples was expressed in terms of life, joy and freedom: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly"; "that your joy may be made full," and "the truth shall make you free." Joy, liberty, and life are all in play.

2. The place of play in the Sunday school. In the Beginners' and also in the Primary Department two extremes are to be found. Some teachers have felt it necessary to introduce play exercises of a gymnastic nature, and materials to be used in playing. They have not realized that these are only partial phases of play expression, and sometimes not even that; that in their use there is danger of *overshadowing the higher forms of the play spirit possible to little children*. Other teachers have been so fearful of turning the Sunday school into a house of play, and have been so earnest to have what they call religious results, that they have used methods of a work type, not knowing what is truest and most beautiful in the religion of a little child. First, let us remember that the Beginners' Department without the play spirit is an irreligious place, for little children cannot be sincerely religious except on a natural plane. Many children repeat verses and prayers, and the exercise is thought to be religious, but they are irreligious in doing it, because the spirit that is true to their life is left out. On the other hand, we must not forget that a Beginners' Department in using a certain type

¹ Christian Nurture, Part II, p. 339f.

of play—for example, jumping—may be irreligious also, because the spirit of reverence and obedience has been lost.

We may cultivate the real play spirit in a Beginners' session without using the more formal plays of the week day. It is important to make a distinction between week-day plays and making use of the spirit of play in the Sunday school. In not a few Beginners' Departments to-day one may find the real play spirit. In such a group there is much joyous activity and freedom of action; the children may perhaps run one by one to drop their offering in the basket on the floor in the center of the circle; again, they may gather around the piano or stand with the leader because "it is nice to sing that way"; they may sit on the floor in semicircles around the leader to have "a good time" in hearing a story, until, as one watches the many free, joyous acts, one is reminded of an old verse, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." In this delight there is the play element. A certain group of Beginners had heard a story, with the words "He careth for you" given as a climax. It was very sweet to see two or three little ones go, by the suggestion of their leader, to some others in the circle, and put their arms around them playfully, and say gently and brightly, "He careth for you." It is a question whether any of them realized the meaning of "He careth," but the loving, gentle action had its charm and value. At another time certain children were called to be "loving mothers" and "strong fathers" and to go and help the younger ones put on their rubbers. In this way what might have been a task became a helpful service done in the spirit of play.

3. Three essentials which are interdependent. Think of the point of contact and the use of the positive rather than the negative in teaching, as they were discussed in the last lesson, and a little careful thought will show that these two essentials and the play spirit are like links in a chain—each dependent on the other. One cannot have a point of contact with a little child without the playful spirit, and it is impossible to have that spirit unless there be a point of contact in the

subject-matter we use with him. And, of course, if the negative, that which is wrong, bad, or undesirable, is dwelt upon, there can be no joyous play spirit. The presentation of that which is good and beautiful will be a help in fulfilling the other two essentials.

Coe's strong words will give a climax to this study: "Opposition between the play spirit and the religious spirit is not real but only fancied. . . . Unless we discover the unity of play with education in religion, we shall never secure control of the whole child or the whole youth for Christ. . . . The practical problem in part is to extend the Christian spirit through all the games and plays of children and youth, and the *play spirit through all the instrumentalities of religious education*, so that the whole life shall be lived in the sight of God and in friendship with Christ."¹

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

What do you understand by the play spirit?

Give an illustration of something done in a Beginners' group that would be religious from the standpoint of a little child; something that would be irreligious.

Give illustrations of teaching by the use of the positive and by the use of the negative. (Remember that the positive means always that which should be, that which is desirable—true, beautiful, and right; the negative, that which should not be—an effort to guide to the right by an emphasis on what is wrong.)

¹ Education in Religion and Morals, pp. 144, 145.

LESSON XIII

LITTLE CHILDREN SINGING

"I'LL just choose two or three familiar songs out of the book each Sunday and let the children sing them." So said a young substitute teacher to a friend who asked her about her plan for the singing in the two months she was to have charge of the Beginners. Evidently to her this was a matter of small importance. Her eyes were blind to the great opportunity through singing, both in regard to what was chosen and the way it might be presented.

The good teacher will choose her songs in relation to her plan for the day. Will she think also of her plan for the season? The children will often ask for other songs that are dear to them, because they have become familiar and are really their own. The number of beautiful hymns and songs for little children have so increased in recent years that it is quite possible to have only what is fitting; yet many are still in use that are not fitting because teachers have not realized the importance of the opportunity for good through music and song, and the need for study about the use of both.

1. The use and influence of music. Do you know anything like music for developing a mood tending toward reverence? It rests and soothes the little spirit and again calls forth emotions of love and joy. Music of the right kind will arouse the spirit of prayer, will quiet disturbing elements, will, in short, do what words or bells are powerless to do. But deeper far than this will be its influence. It has been said that "the right music will serve to govern as well as arouse those germs of feeling which later become life-controlling emotions." Professor Tomlins, who twenty years ago did more perhaps than any other one man for the improvement of children's singing, said what may well be

repeated now: "Deep down beyond the far-reaching influences of the schools, deeper than what he does or thinks, at the very heart and soul of the boy, are latent tendencies for good and for evil, of which even he, himself, is ignorant. These music alone will reach—music, the voice of love, heaven-born, God-given. It searches out the flower-germs of the soul, awakening them to response, stimulating them to a largeness of growth that leaves no place for words."

But this influence will depend on the suitability of the music and the way it is used. The kind for the younger child and that for the older is quite different. And this is one strong reason for having the little ones by themselves. The musician needs to understand children and music. One more perfect in technique does not always play as sympathetically for little children as one who understands their needs. Softness of touch, sweetness of tone (both in playing and singing), with the feeling expressed, will do more good than the mere technicalities of music. The piano must be made to tell stories, sometimes of rest and quiet, sometimes of joy and life, and again of singing birds and waving trees, of ringing bells and shining sunbeams. This is one way in which "germs of feeling" may be "governed as well as aroused," as suggested above. And some expression, some activity on the part of the children should follow. They come to recognize quickly a "glad story" or a "sorry story" from the instrument. If it is not possible to have a piano in the Beginners' room, see if some one who has a violin will use it here. A small organ is not so desirable; it is too heavy for little voices, and it is not possible to bring the same feeling to children through its use. It cannot tell stories to them as does a piano. The use of an instrument a few minutes before the beginning of the service is of great value. Playing of a right kind will help to overcome too great noise, and will prepare the way for appropriate opening. "Songs without words," or a tune that will later have the word-story associated with it, may be played; subconsciously the children grow familiar with a tune in that way.

If Beginners cannot have a room to themselves, see if they may not have one song in the service that is all their own.

2. The importance of right method. Two teachers had chosen to teach the good song, "All Things Bright and Beautiful." This is the way one did it; first, she wrote the first verse on the blackboard and then said, "Now, children, as you cannot read, I will read the new song for you, and you say the words after me. We will take just one line at a time." Each of the four lines was repeated after the teacher. "Now, we will say the four together. And then Miss S will play just one line while we try and sing it." The other teacher told a story about a garden and what she saw in it. She asked, "Who made each little flower? and who taught the birdie how to sing?" Then she said: "Somebody told me all about it. I will sing it to you just as it was told to me." And very softly she sang:

"Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.
Yes, all things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
And all things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."

Then this teacher said, "The piano can tell the same story while we listen, and cannot we have a garden right here, and have some little children for flowers just opening, and two birdies flying about?" After this all sang "la, la" as the tune was played. "Next Sunday we will sing it again," said she, "for the clock says, 'Time to stop now.'"

Which teacher had a real point of contact? Which was teaching words rather than cultivating feelings? Was it wise to write on the blackboard when Beginners could not read? Which teacher do you feel had most sympathy with child life?

3. Some desirable methods. In the Sunday school, as

in the kindergarten the song both in words and music should be the embodiment of the thought given in lesson story or conversation. The children will delight in singing other songs connected with what has been done in preceding weeks, and, of course, there will be the general hymn of praise, or prayer of thanksgiving. The whole service should be a unit, not a "general exercise" of unrelated songs followed by a lesson disjointed from the rest. The song which has relation to the story should usually follow rather than precede it. Sometimes the song that is to emphasize the truth of the story comes before hearing that story, but as a rule it follows.

The artist is one who puts in the highest touch at the right moment in the right place. Sometimes a verse may be effectively sung to, or by the children in the middle of a story; more often it will come best at the end. The prayer to be sung will be most helpful if it comes before, rather than immediately after some spirited song or activity. The arrangement of the singing must be thought of, as well as the right kind of song and its right presentation. If children are restless, a song put in at the needed moment will often restore the right spirit. It should not be, however, one that will divert attention from what is desirable.

To sing to the children as a part of the story-telling is most helpful. It often enriches the feeling and gives the touch most needed; for instance, in telling about Jesus and the children, supposing the song "The Master Has Come Over Jordan" has furnished the realistic setting of the incident; the teacher may then give the story again, set to music, using the following words and singing very distinctly:

"The Master has come over Jordan,
Said Hannah, the mother, one day.
He is healing the people who throng him
With a touch of his finger they say.
And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel and Samuel and John,
And dear little Esther the baby,
For the Master to look upon.

“Now, why shouldst thou hinder the Master,’
Said Peter, ‘with children like these?
Thou knowest how from morn until evening
He is teaching, and healing disease.’
Said Jesus, ‘Forbid not the children;
Permit them to come unto me.’
And he took in his arms little Esther,
And Rachel he set on his knee.”

Of course, such a song as this is not to be sung by the children.

To sing to them a song intended for them to learn, helps them to follow a tune and become familiar with a group of words without any formal drill. They can very quickly “tell the story as teacher does.” And this leads them to right expression; to sing a tune merrily if it is merry, brightly if it is gay, softly if it is gentle and quiet. The tone or sound of the voice itself has a moral influence. A soft, pleasant tone—or, in other words, a singing voice—will never be a cross nor angry one; and so, for more reasons than one, the Beginners’ Sunday school may well copy the soft, sweet, gentle singing of the kindergarten.

Sometimes the tune may be developed first. A particular song is to be sung on a certain Sunday. For two or three weeks previous, the tune is played. The piano speaks without words, and the children hum softly what the piano says; when the time comes for the song to be added to the tune, it is sung to the children; they afterward and gradually joining in the words. Rarely, with this method, will the mere repetition of words be needed. It will be a slower method—slower, but surer, for any real development of a song, and its assimilation, requires several Sundays. The simple childlike “song-stories” and hymns of praise, which come so close to child feeling and experience that a responsive chord is touched are given back almost as the spontaneous utterance of the little soul, if they are rightly developed.

4. **Types of songs.** Be sure that the songs are “simple

and childlike." The absurd misconstructions and interpretations that little people give to songs, and the wrong religious notions that they gain, are due largely to the Sunday school and to the fact that they hear things which they should not know for years. Here is a Sunday school where the Beginners join with the Primary Department for the opening service, and all these children under nine years of age are singing "When He Cometh"! The teachers have not stopped to think of the mystifying symbolism in this song. Study it just to see what appreciation it necessitates: a child must have a knowledge of "jewels," their value, the term "gem," a "crown," and of how he himself can be a jewel. No wonder a little girl asked her mother a while ago to sing the "biscuit song." Thinking of the only "gem" she knew, she sang

"He will gather, he will gather,
The gems for his crown."

We are told that "the children like this," and so of other songs that are just as unchildlike. So they "like" candy or vulgar street posters, or a dozen other things we withhold. What the children like is one essential, but it is not the all-controlling one. Seek the reason of the children's likings; often it is the rhythm of the words or the melody of the music that charms. Supply that point of interest in a better song.

The most beautiful story in poetry or prose will be ruined by a word analysis. Do not expect a child to understand every word of the best songs. But there must be a heart-appreciation and a general comprehension of a song if it is to be of any value—in other words, a mental image of the word picture.

Some of our choicest hymns have symbolic touches that may be replaced by simpler words. But we must be careful not to convert the poetic form into a mere jingle. Certain transpositions and adaptations may ruin the whole, and become like the one-syllable story books, with their crude and useless limitations. If, however, we see the beauty of sim-

plicity and the evil of symbolic language, some one who has sufficient poetic feeling may make acceptable changes.

Think of that beautiful children's hymn, "I think when I read that sweet story of old." We shall never grow beyond it, but there is one line that has an unchildlike symbolism—"Yet still to his footstool in prayer I may go." We may better say, "Yet still to the Saviour in prayer I may go."

One other illustration is from "Little Drops of Water."

"Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make this world an Eden,
Like the heaven above."

Many children are unfamiliar with "Eden" but there will be a point of contact if we sing,

"Make our homes so happy,
Like the heaven above."

In some of the best collections of more recent songs there are instances of symbolic words that might well be changed in similar ways to childlike expressions.

GOOD SONGS FOR BEGINNERS

The following list of songs gives some of the best to use with Beginners. It is intended to be suggestive but by no means exhaustive. For students who are not familiar with what is good, these songs should be typical from the standpoint of both words and music. Of course it is inevitable that some are superior to others in simplicity and beauty, and that should be considered when a selection is made. In a number of instances two sources are mentioned in order that those teachers who cannot purchase one, two, or three books may be able to secure some desirable songs in inexpensive form.

PRAYER SONGS

"THANKS FOR DAILY BLESSINGS."

"Father of all, in heaven above."

Song stories for the Sunday School. P. S. and M. J. Hill (Clayton F. Summy and Co.).¹ Price, 15 cents.
 Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School, Frederica Beard (Clayton F. Summy and Co.). Price, 25 cents.

"MORNING PRAYER."

"Father, we thank thee for the night."

Songs for Little People, Danielson and Conant. (Methodist Book Concern.) Price, 60 cents.

"THANKS FOR CONSTANT CARE."

"Father, we thank thee for the light."

Song Stories for the Sunday School.

"MORNING PRAYER."

"Now the night is over."

Kindergarten Chimes. (Oliver Ditson Company.) Price, \$1.00.

"GOD'S CARE OF ALL THINGS."

"Father, thou who carest."

(For the autumn season with its thought of God's providence for little creatures.)

Song Stories for the Sunday School;

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"HYMN OF THANKS."

"For my home and friends I thank thee."

(A beautiful prayer to use in connection with home stories.)

Songs for Little People.

"A PRAYER FOR EACH SEASON."

"Hear us thank thee, kindest Friend."

(A one verse prayer for each of the four seasons.)

Songs for Little People.

MISCELLANEOUS

"GOOD MORNING TO OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL."

"Good morning to our Sunday School."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

¹ To be had of The Methodist Book Concern.

"CHURCH BELLS."

"Come, come, people come,
This the bells' message to me, to you."

Song stories for the Sunday School.

"SABBATH MORNING BELLS."

"Holy Sabbath, happy morning,
Joyfully the bells we hear."

Songs for Little People.

"JESUS LOVES ME."

"Jesus loves me! this I know."

Songs for Little People.

"THERE'S A FRIEND FOR LITTLE CHILDREN."

"There's a friend for little children."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"I THINK WHEN I READ."

"I think when I read that sweet story of old."

Songs for Little People.

"FATHER'S AND MOTHER'S CARE."

"Loving Mother, Kind and True."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"OBEDIENT."

"Just see that child running."

Songs of a little Child's Day, Emilie Poulsson and
Eleanor Smith (Milton Bradley and Company). Price,
\$1.50.

"MINDING THEIR MOTHER."

"When mother pussy mewed, Come here."

Songs of a Little Child's Day.

"USEFUL."

"He brings his father's slippers."

Songs of a Little Child's Day.

"TO AND FRO" (March song).

"To and fro, to and fro."

Songs for Little People.

"GOOD-BY SONG."

"Good-by to all."

Songs for Little People.

"CLOSING SONG."

"Sunday school is over."

Carols, Ida F. Leyda. (Leyda Publishing Company.)

Price, 25 cents.

NATURE SONGS

"ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL."

"Each little flower that opens."

Songs for Little People.

"GOD'S WORK."

"All things bright and beautiful."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"LITTLE BROWN SEED."

"Little brown seed, O little brown brother."

Songs for Little People.

"THE CHEERFUL SUNBEAM."

"One day a sunbeam met a cloud."

Songs for Little People.

"HAPPY AS A ROBIN."

"Happy as a robin."

Songs for Little People.

"THE FLOWER BED."

"Baby, what do the blossoms say?"

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"I ASKED THE LOVELY LITTLE FLOWER."

"I asked the lovely little flower."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"LITTLE DROPS OF WATER."

"Little drops of water."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"WIND, SUN, AND RAIN."

"Blow, winds, blow."

Carols.

"THE MERRY WIND."

"The wind, one gusty morning."

Songs of a Little Child's Day.

"THE AUTUMN WIND."

"With whistle and shout, the wind hurried out."

Songs of a Little Child's Day.

"THE BUSY WIND."

"The wind blew low, and the wind blew high."

Songs of a Little Child's Day.

"WORLD WONDERS."

"Look up! look up and tell to me."

Songs of the Child World, No. 2 Riley and Gaynor.

(The John Church Company.) Price, \$1.00.

SONGS FOR SPECIAL DAYS

Christmas

"CHRISTMAS CAROL."

"In a lowly manger on the fragrant hay."

Songs of the Child World. No. 2.

"CHRISTMAS HYMN."

"In another land and time."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"IN THE BETHLEHEM STABLE."

"'Twas in a lowly stable."

Songs of a Little Child's Day.

"WHY DO BELLS AT CHRISTMAS RING?"

"Why do bells at Christmas ring?"

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

Songs for Little People (different tune).

"CHRISTMAS NIGHT."

"Once within a lowly stable."

Song Stories for the Sunday School.

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"WHITE STARS OF CHRISTMAS SHINE."

"White stars of Christmas shine."

Holiday Songs, Emilie Poulsson. (Milton Bradley Company.) Price, \$2.00.

"THE CHRISTMAS MANGER HYMN."

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed" (two tunes).

Songs for Little People.

Easter

"AWAKE! AWAKE."

"In the sunny springtime."

Holiday Songs.

"CHILDREN'S EASTER PRAISE."

"On this blessed Easter day."

Songs for Little People.

Thanksgiving

"THANKSGIVING SONG."

"O come, dear little children."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

Song Stories for the Sunday School.

Birthdays

"BIRTHDAY SONG."

"Greetings we offer thee, playmate so dear."

Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.

"A BIRTHDAY GREETING."

"A birthday greeting to you, dear."

Songs for Little People.

SONGS TO BE SUNG TO CHILDREN

"THE MASTER HAS COME OVER JORDAN."

Songs for Little Children.

CHANT: "SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN."

In many church hymnals.

ANTHEM: "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST."

In many church hymnals.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

In previous lessons it has been said that feeling should be developed through action. Does singing give an opportunity?

It has also been said that impulse should be made use of. Suppose there is an impulse to say "Thank you." Will the prayer-hymn be an expression of the impulse?

Is it possible to have the play spirit in singing?

Will the child's activity be utilized?

LESSON XIV

THE PRAYING OF A LITTLE CHILD

"WE do not pray because we believe in God," says Lyman Abbott; "we believe in God because we pray. A mother wishes her child to grow into an experience of prayer. So every night, when plays and tasks and human fellowships have come to an end for the day, she kneels by her child's bed and together they pray. The child repeats 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' or 'Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,' and with it the wishes of his love for others. There is a moment of pure unselfishness, a moment of indefinable peace. The mother feels an invisible companionship which she makes no attempt to explain. The child catches the feeling from the mother and shares it without understanding it. He wishes to do what mother does, to share his mother's 'Quiet Hour.' He prays—he believes in the life because he possesses it."

1. **The purpose of a little child's praying.** It is much the same with the true motherly teacher with her group of Beginners: she wishes her children "*to grow into an experience of prayer*" that they may know God and feel that he is near. She "feels an invisible companionship which she makes no attempt to explain." The children catch the feeling from this motherly friend and share it without understanding it. If they are few in number, they gather around her knee; if they make a larger circle, all bow their heads. And then they pray—they believe in the life because they possess it. It has been said, "The religion that children learn should become the religion that they live." It is truer to say, "The religion that they live will become the religion that they learn." Which is more important, to do a good thing or to learn about doing it? For example, to obey or to learn words about obeying? Which way shall we understand more

quickly what obedience is? Is instruction or training the more important?

2. The importance of right response. While the act of praying makes God more real to a child, and the expression, "Thank you," intensifies a feeling of thanks, it is well to awaken desire in regard to prayer. After a most natural conversation with one group of Beginners about the good things in the Sunday school room that God had given, and a suggestion from the teacher, "It would be nice to thank him, would it not?" a little one responded, "Can't we do it now?" The right sort of response is worth much, and this teacher might well feel content. A single sentence will be often a more heartfelt response from little children than a longer prayer, as for instance, any of the following:

"Dear Father in heaven, we thank thee for taking care of us. Amen."

"Our Father, we thank thee for the food we had for breakfast. Amen."

"God, our Father, we thank thee for the flowers and all the nice things we have. Amen."

"Dear heavenly Father, when we are all alone and afraid, please take care of us. Amen."

It happens that three of these short prayers are expressions of satisfaction and one is a petition. That proportion is as it should be. Of course the kind of asking expressed here is right, if it emphasizes to a child that God will take care of him; if it raises any doubt or question as to that care, it is wrong. But remember in teaching children to pray it is not wise to teach them to ask for material things; often they will not get them, and then they are puzzled and disappointed. If they spontaneously ask anything, of course, they should not be hindered. Sometimes, in order to gain a right response with children who have not been trained to a reverent way of acting, it is necessary to deprive them of what they should gradually come to feel is a privilege. A kindergartner had found her rough children so little prepared for the daily

prayer that she finally said after trying different means, "I am sorry, but we cannot have a prayer together this morning; we will wait until we can say it in the right way." The next morning she again expressed sorrow, and went on to other things. The third day a child asked, "Miss Alice, mayn't we have our prayer now?" The leader looked at the forty children and they grew very quiet for a moment, then she said: "Shall we? Do you all want it?" There was an eager response. They seemed conscious that something was wrong without a prayer, and they prayed as they had never prayed before. The omission had been worth while. Of course this ought not to be necessary with most groups, but such a method is better than to attempt to have a prayer under wrong conditions.

3. The form of the prayer. Shall we encourage little children to pray in their own words or shall we teach them a form of words to use? It is desirable to do both. We teach them how to pray by the use of simple sentence prayers in a child's own language, such as we have suggested above. In addition they should be taught a few formal prayers for use on occasions, such as an opening and closing prayer, and one for the children's birthdays. They should also have a morning and an evening prayer, and a grace for table, for use at home.

The advantage of the above formal prayer is that having become familiar with the form, they can enter more into the spirit that is back of it. This is one reason for interest in the repetition of the story. A new arrangement of words presented constantly is a hindrance rather than a help. Of course there must be a certain spontaneity in the way the old form is suggested and expressed. If it becomes mechanical and the children grow careless in expression, a change had better be made. This must be decided by careful observation of the way they pray. "Observation" does not necessarily mean looking. Even to have an assistant look out of the corner of her eye, with the motive of seeing what the children are doing, is bad. There may be mental observation,

or it may be wise for the pianist, who may not close her eyes, to sit so that she can note and afterward report privately to the leader her impressions. In all these seemingly little matters it is the hand of an artist rather than an artisan that is needed to bring about a beautiful result.

4. **Physical attitude in prayer.** Physical attitude in prayer is important. Kneeling or bowing the head often has a right influence on the spirit. Much will be gained if we follow the custom of our Episcopal and Catholic friends in this respect. It is best to lead children by example and suggestion to bow their heads and close their eyes when speaking or singing to God. A worshipful attitude is worth much. And this is just as important when a prayer is sung as when it is said. It has been a matter of surprise to note in many Sunday schools that when, for instance, "Father, we thank thee for the night," is sung, no prayer attitude is sought or expected. Of course, much singing with the head bowed would be objectionable because of a degree of contraction, but in this case and to this extent, it is more important to train in worship than to consider correct musical expression. In this connection we may think of the distinction between hymns and songs. The hymn as a song of praise and adoration is sung to the person; the song as a poem set to music is about person or subject. Recognizing the difference, we shall teach and use these in different ways, having the children think of the hymn in the same sense as the prayer, in that we speak to the Father in both, and shall seek therefore for a more reverent manner than with other songs.

5. **How to secure a spirit of worship.** Before leading little children in prayer the teacher should seek to call forth the spirit of worship, as, for example, if the prayer is to be a morning thanksgiving, she may talk to the children about the day and their gladness in it. If her object is to call forth gratitude to God for his good gifts and help her little people to express it, she may show a flower and permit the children to admire its beautiful colors and to enjoy its perfume.

Often an attitude and spirit of worship may be gained through a brief prelude of music of the right kind. It may be a tune to which a prayer is set, but if the prayer is to be said and not sung, quiet attention and reverence will follow the soft playing of a few strains of such tunes as "Saviour, Breathe an Evening Blessing," and "Nearer, my God, to Thee." It is interesting to see how quickly children will respond to the call of the piano to do certain things they have come to associate with its different sounds. Sometimes a picture will help toward a right spirit. Such a picture as Joshua Reynolds' "Samuel" may be hung on the wall for its silent influence. Or, a picture of a child "saying grace" may be shown after a conversation about our food. There should be no forced imitation through this, but simply a natural suggestion as to what the child is doing, or of the story the picture tells.

6. Suitable prayers for Beginners. The following prayers, to be used with or without music, are illustrations of what is suitable for use:

"Father of all, in heaven above,
We thank thee for thy love.
Our food, our homes, and all we wear,
Tell of thy loving care. Amen."

(Tune in Song Stories for the Sunday School, and Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.)

"Father, we thank thee for the light
Thou sendest us by day.
For moon and stars that shine at night.
Thou sendest too their ray.

"Father, we thank thee for our homes,
And all the blessings there.
O may we grow more like to thee
In tender love and care. Amen."

(Tune in Song Stories for the Sunday School, and Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.)

"Father, thou who carest for smallest tiny flowers,
 And teachest bees and squirrels to save for winter hours.
 To thee we little children our loving thanks would bring,
 For all thy loving kindness, of all thy goodness sing. Amen."

(Tune in Song Stories for the Sunday School.)

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear us,
 Bless thy little ones, we pray;
 Through the morning be thou near us,
 Keep us safe through all the day. Amen."

(Tune in Songs and Hymns for the Primary Sunday School.)

"For our homes and friends we thank thee,
 For our fathers, mothers dear,
 For the hills, the trees, the flowers,
 And the sky so bright and clear."

(Tune in Songs for Little People.)

"Hear us thank thee, kindest Friend,
 For the springtime thou dost send,
 For the warm sunshine and rain,
 For the birds that sing again,
 For the sky so clear and blue,
 For this happy Sunday too—
 Hear us thank thee."

(To be used in the spring.)

"Kindest Friend, we thank thee now,
 While our heads we lowly bow,
 For the summer sun and shower,
 For each bright and smiling flower,
 For grass so green and cloud so white.
 For rosy morn and dewy night—
 Hear us thank thee."

(To be used in the summer.)

"Friend so gentle, kind and dear,
 Listen to thy children here,

While they thank thee for thy love,
Shown in stars that shine above,
Shown in frost, in cloud o'erhead,
Shown in leaves of gold and red—
Hear us thank thee."

(To be used in the autumn.)

"Loving Friend, O hear our prayer,
Take into thy tender care
All the leaves and flowers that sleep,
In their white bed covered deep.
Shelter from the wintry storm
All thy snowbirds: keep them warm—
Hear our prayer."

(To be used in the winter.)

(Tune for the above four verses in Songs for Little People.)

"Father in heaven, help thy little children
To love and serve thee throughout this day;
Help us to be truthful, help us to be kindly,
That we may please thee in all we do or say."

(Tune in Kindergarten Chimes.)

"Father, we thank thee for the night,
And for the pleasant morning light;
For rest and food and loving care,
And all that makes the day so fair.

"Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good;
In all we do, in work or play
To grow more loving every day."

(Tune in Kindergarten Chimes, and in Songs for Little People.)

"Dear Father, we thank thee
For giving our food;
Please bless it and help us
Each one to be good."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

What should be the purpose in teaching a child to pray?

What kind of a prayer is best?

How is reverence in prayer to be cultivated?

Show how the principle of the point of contact is applied in any one of the prayers given here that you choose.

LESSON XV

THE PURPOSE IN STORY-TELLING

THERE will be no "lessons" for Beginners. Stories will be the lessons, in so far as there are any to be taught, but these must be kept as stories—just stories. There is danger of taking a story and turning it into a lesson. The motherly teacher will gather her children around her, and as the mother tells a story to her little ones at home, so will she. Knowledge, in the sense of learning facts, may go to the winds.

I. The high purpose of the story-teller. The Beginners' teacher has a higher purpose than that of imparting facts. Of course, in almost any story she tells, the children gain some information, and this is well so long as the giving of it is not made her primary purpose, for there is a more important one, and the choice of the story and of the way it is developed must be made in view of that higher purpose. This teacher has a truth to bring to her little ones that will be as food to their religious life, and it is wrapped up in several stories. They are to see it first in one story, then in another, and again more fully in another, and another. She may want to teach the truth that God is love. She selects a number of stories in line with this purpose. She does not separate the truth from the stories, for if she did, they would not understand it. As she tells the stories they are like pictures, each showing a little bit of life that these children know about, but into which they have never looked understandingly. They have not stopped long enough before to see in this bit of life the beautiful truth that *God is love*. Now they feel it, they know it without hearing it in words. The teacher felt it as she told the stories, and the feeling was catching. That was "the lesson" of several weeks. In feeling love, they grew loving, for their friend

made little ways by which they could express love. And "Love from love is sure to grow"; "We love Him because He first loved us."

2. A story for this purpose. One Sunday the Beginners' teacher told the following story illustrating love:

Some people were going together to a beautiful home. The Father of this home had called them to come and be with him. So they started. They came from many different places and by many different ways, and they had a long way to go. One day, they saw a little child who had had no breakfast nor supper. The little one was very hungry, and they said, "We must give some of our supper to this little one," and so the child was fed. By and by they met an old man, a stranger, walking all alone up the long road. "Let us help him," they said, "it will be nicer for him to be with us," and the old man was happy to go with them. Another day, as these people went on their way, they found a mother with her little children, all of them cold and in rags, for they had no warm clothes, nor money to buy any. "O! we have more clothes than they have," they said. "We must stop awhile and give them some"; and once more the people stopped. Here they found sick children too, and some who were kept in a large house and could not ever go out. They waited to visit them and tried to make them happy. At last they came near the home of the great Father. The light from this home was more beautiful than anything they had ever seen. Just as they entered the door, Some One met them and he said: "Come in, come in! You may have this home with me, for when I was hungry you gave me something to eat; when I was thirsty you gave me a drink; when I was a stranger and all alone you took me with you; when I was sick you came to visit me." Then these people said: "We never did anything for you. We never saw you when you were hungry and sick." And he said, "No, but you did these things for the people you did see, and it was just as good as doing them for me." It was Jesus who was speaking, and he took them to the Heavenly Father.

Do you see that this teacher had one great purpose in telling this story? It might be called the general aim: to lead the child to the Father by a cultivation of right feeling. This was a part of a purpose continued for several weeks: to show God's love through definite word pictures. The

particular purpose for the day was to show love in action that was like God's. There should be always the one and the other, related to each other; the purpose of the one day contributing to the larger purpose, and in some instances being a climax of what has gone before. The general aim will be continuous and apply to all stories used, while in the case of each there should be also a specific aim.

3. A threefold purpose. The description given above ought to reveal a threefold purpose: (1) To make God real to the little child, or, we may say, to make him conscious of God; (2) to develop a right feeling in the child; (3) to lead him to act rightly. A story may do one or another of these three things, or it may do all three to some extent. If it has not the capacity—the *producing power* we may call it—to do one of these, *it is not worth telling in Sunday school*. Sometimes a story is told to introduce a story, or to “get the attention of the children for the lesson.” That is a poor purpose and a poor method. It suggests at once that the second story, or the so-called lesson, is not what it should be, that it has not the power to get attention or bring a direct response. Generally speaking, one story is all-sufficient; if, as an exception, two are needed to fulfill a certain purpose, then they had better not be immediately connected. Confusion is likely to result, and the desired impression be altogether lost.

4. Fulfilling the purpose. With a purpose there must be an expected result, a fulfillment. But the one may not immediately follow the other. And often it is not so direct as we might imagine. Frances Weld Danielson has well said: “We do not desire children that have merely knowledge, neither do we wish emotional children. We prefer children that act. Do we, then, expect an immediate and continuous response in conduct? Do we find our children a little more helpful after each of a group of stories on helpfulness? Shall we see an instantaneous unselfish act follow our lesson on that subject, and prompt obedience the result of a story illustrating that virtue? How is it with ourselves? Do we respond immediately to the fine sermon or touching song

or inspiring book? Is not our next act often a petty one? Has the inspiration then gone for nothing? Not at all. The great difference is that we feel our pettiness as never before. The result of our ideal raised is discontent and contrition at not reaching that ideal, which leads eventually to greater effort and hence to greater success. We certainly cannot expect more of our children than of ourselves. After all, don't you find in yourself that the only effective incentive to goodness is love of goodness? If we have awakened the response of love of right in our children, we may well feel satisfied, even if their acts do not always bear this out."¹ This is really a cultivation of attitude; it is much if a child wants to do right. An interesting illustration of this is the following: "I wish my little boy would try to be good all the time," said Bobby's mamma, rocking him to sleep. "I do," replied Bobby, "but I don't think I am big enough to do very well at it yet." Bobby was right. One has to try to be good a long, long time before "doing very well at it."²

5. The unseen fulfillment. We cannot always know that a story has served its purpose. We can tell very little by their remarks, but occasionally a word dropped, a look shown will reveal much. One day, when a sprouting acorn was taken to forty little children, and a story told of the sleeping baby who was just waking up, with the purpose of cultivating reverence for the new life that was around these children, the look of wonder and appreciation that came into those faces was such that it has not been forgotten by the story-teller through the years.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

What is the most important purpose in story-telling?

Name a threefold plan that a teacher may have in the fulfillment of this purpose.

What truth do you find in the illustration here given?

On what Bible passage is this story based?

¹ "The Pilgrim Teacher," October, 1913.

² Love and Law in Child Training, p. 152.

LESSON XVI

STORIES THAT FULFILL THE PURPOSE

THERE are three desirable types of stories to use with Beginners in Sunday school in fulfilling the purposes discussed in the last lesson. These three types are (1) nature stories, (2) stories of home life, (3) Bible stories, including those developed from biblical incidents or statements.

1. Nature stories. There is a beautiful opportunity through nature stories to show God's protection and care for all his creatures and to cultivate in the little child such virtues as reverence, joy, gratitude, kindness, and obedience. By this time the student should have had opportunity to become acquainted with the Beginners' Teacher's Text Books, International Graded Lessons. Students are asked to study especially the following stories, noting how they fulfill the purpose stated above: Father and Mother Bird's Care; The Heavenly Father's Care for Birds and Animals; Animals Protecting Their Little Ones; God's Gift of Snow; How God Protects Plants; How God Protects Birds; The Gift of Day and Night; God's Gift of the Wind, Sun, and Rain. Other illustrations of a somewhat different type which will be found to be admirable are The Golden Fairies, The Glendiveers, The Waterdrop Family, The Crystal Workers and The Little Seed. As an example of these we give the story of The Golden Fairies.

THE GOLDEN FAIRIES

A company of golden fairies went hand in hand into the woods one day. They were bright and beautiful as they skipped and danced along their way. Presently they came to a place where a tiny flower baby lived. The little one was fast asleep in the dark brown earth, which was its house. A crack in the earth near by made a window for the fairies to peep through.

The house was very dark and very cold. They saw the baby fast asleep, and they said to each other, "Let us go away and come again some other day, and we will each bring something for the baby." Then one little fairy said, "Let us make the dark house light," and another fairy said, "Let us make the cold house warm." A third fairy said, "I would like to give the baby a new dress," and the last fairy said, "I will carry a kiss to the little one."

And so it was. When they went back, they stayed a long time. As they worked together the house grew lighter and lighter. Then it began to grow very warm. The baby moved a little, and one little fairy passed very softly through the window and gently kissed the half-waked flower. Then they all called, "Come little one, come out and play with us."

As the baby flower opened wide its eyes, it saw itself clothed with a beautiful violet dress. A sister who had waked earlier, and gone out into the world, looked from her place and said, "They always call us violets."

Children, can you guess who were the golden fairies? They go into many dark places of the earth. They help to make the world beautiful. Often they peep through your window. Sometimes you may see them on the curtain, on the wall or on the floor, and I have seen them dressed in the most beautiful colors of red and orange, and green, blue, and violet, standing side by side.

A little child sang this song about one of these fairies—its name I will not tell, but let you say it in the right place.

"When I'm softly sleeping
In the early morn,
Through my window creeping
A ——— comes new born.
It gently says good morning,
Then with golden light,
Peeping through my curtain
Makes my room so bright.

"Welcome little ———
Kindly thou hast come.
Bringing cheerful ———
From thy far-off home.
Welcome little ———
Gladly I would be,
Pure, and bright and gentle,
Helpful just like thee."¹

¹ By Nellie C. Alexander, adapted from Froebel. Tune by Eleanor Smith in *Songs for Little People*, Vol. I.

2. Home life stories. Through stories of home life, feelings of protection, love, and kindness may all be developed. As one possibility, think of helpers in the home, and for the home. In the Circle Talks, and incidentally in some of the stories of the International Graded Lessons, many references are made to this thought. See especially the folder stories used when Bible stories are retold, such as "A Little Lost Child," "Great Grandmother's Birthday," "Big Sister," "A Little Helper," and "Harry's Good-by." It would be well, occasionally, to have stories emphasizing ideal home life. A story, for instance, about father and mother love, about dear old grandmother's kindness, or about the servant in the house. The following is a simple illustration:

Once there was a dear old nurse and her name was Auntie Nan. In the home where she was nurse there were two, three, four, five boys and girls. All day long she helped these little people. All night long she slept near by them. If one was ill or cried in the night, Auntie Nan was near to comfort and to help. Once when Baby Betty was ill nurse held her in her arms all through the night, and never went to sleep at all. She was just like a mother to these children. She tied Polly's ribbon on her hair. She sewed up the holes in Tommy's stockings. She made the nicest little caps for little Jack and Joe. But one Sunday morning, just like ours to-day, Auntie Nan was so tired and so sick she could not get up. Then the children said, "What can we do?" Dear Polly climbed up in the big chair. "I'll play nurse," she said. "I'll take my bestest handkerchief and wet it, and put it on her head." And Tommy said, "I'll go on tip toe upstairs, so she won't know." "Now, Jack and Joe," said Polly, "you run out and pick dandelions and I'll put them in the vase for her to see when she wakes up. Let's take Betty out of doors too, so she won't cry." And so they did.

Helpers for the home may suggest cooperation and bring respect for workers whom children do not always honor, that is, the milkman as a helper, the woodsman, the policeman. The last named should suggest protection rather than fear to little ones; he should be pictured as one who takes care when mothers and children cross the streets, who guards a child if he gets lost, who watches at night that all may be

kept safe. Family cooperation may be suggested, as well as feelings of admiration and wonder cultivated, by stories of the united efforts of ants, bees, and coral workers.

3. Bible stories. For the study of the best typical stories of this kind a few will be named and the titles will quickly suggest what these are to the student familiar with the Bible. If the stories named below are not familiar, and the student does not recall their origin in the Bible, it will be wise to turn to the references given in the Teacher's Text Book, International Graded Lessons, read what the Bible says, and see how some of the subjects are developed there.

The Heavenly Father's Care for Birds and Animals; The Heavenly Father's Care for His Children; The Story of a Shepherd and His Sheep; The Story of the Good Samaritan; The Story of the Baby Jesus; Jesus Caring for Hungry People; Jesus Caring for a Sick Boy; Jesus Loving Little Children; Children's Love for Jesus.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Name one story that is especially fitted for the younger children.

Name one that would be better for five-year-olds than for three-year-olds.

What value is there in teaching little children to think of wind, sun, and rain as helpers?

To whom would you tell a story of snow and ice? To whom would you not tell it?

Can a Bible truth be taught through a nature story?

LESSON XVII

TELLING A STORY

SOMEWHERE it has been told that a little girl was visiting friends and was persuaded rather against her will to go with them to a Vesper service. The minister told a story to his young people, and at the end of the service the child ran up to him impulsively exclaiming, "I wish you were my minister!"

"Why is that, my dear?" said the minister.

"Because you tell stories."

"And does not your minister tell stories?"

"My minister! he don't know enough."

It may be that there are few teachers who "know enough!" Some rules in this lesson may be of help.

I. Four rules for the story-teller. There are four simple rules which should be borne in mind by the Beginners' teacher:

Tell a story—do not "teach" it—to Beginners.

Tell a story—do not read it—to Beginners.

Tell it to yourself before you tell it to them.

Tell it to an imaginary group of children more than once, before you tell it to your own group.

Practice is essential for good story-telling. It is necessary before telling each story, so as to know it thoroughly. The textbook from which the story is taken should be left at home. It is best for the children to feel the spontaneous expression of the story-teller, and it is not for them to know that there is a prepared plan for the leader. She should have her Bible, and use it every now and then. Suppose after telling a story she is going to give a little verse, such as, "He careth for you," or "Be ye kind one to another." It is quite natural to take up the Bible and to say: "I have found something in the Bible for you," or "God has told us something he wanted us to remember. I will read it to you." If the story is from the Bible, it may be opened with the re-

mark, "The story I have for you to-day is told right here in the Bible." This is simply for the sake of association, and to let the children feel that beautiful stories and words are in the Bible and therefore we all love it.

2. The use of objects in story-telling. The nature stories and the conversational stories of home life often call for the use of an object. These will be referred to more fully in a later lesson. But whatever is used should be chosen because of its direct, immediate, and real value, not because of any symbolic value it may have. The object should be introduced in telling the story at just the right time, or it may prove a hindrance rather than a help. To keep it hidden until that time is wise, whether it is at the beginning, the middle, or the end. Suppose after telling of Jesus's love for the flowers and what he said to the people about them, the story-teller should take from a paper a beautiful lily or tulip and say, "If Jesus were here just now, I think he would say, 'Look at this beautiful flower and be glad you have it; you may be happy and grow beautiful too.'" It will mean more to bring it forth just when needed than to have it in full sight from the beginning. This, of course, is as true with a picture. To present it at the right moment in the right way will add much to the effective telling of a story, if the picture be of the right kind.

3. The importance of real interest. To tell a story successfully one must *believe in it, love it, and feel its truth*. That does not mean that a story must be one of facts or that the story-teller must believe it really happened. There is often more spiritual good in a story that is not true than in one of facts. But it is necessary to see the value in the story, to feel the spiritual good, to care for it. If this cannot be in regard to an assigned story, a teacher will do right to omit it, and substitute something which she does believe and love. If she cannot do that, she can repeat one already loved and used.

4. Repetition of stories. To repeat the same story in telling stories to little children is most desirable. One of the

good arrangements in the International Graded Lessons is the opportunity given for repetition and the choice in regard to it. A young teacher, having never heard of repeating a lesson in Sunday school, asked one day if it were right to tell a story a second time and the question was put to her, "Why do you repeat a song?" In first hearing a story a little child often does not enter into more than a part of it, or we may say, it enters only gradually into him. The picture grows before him, and when the framework—the sound, and the form of words become familiar, then the vital part is more and more interesting.

5. Abbreviation and expansion of stories. There are stories that should be abbreviated for use with all young children, and again some that may need abbreviation for a particular group. Suppose a teacher is using the Beginners' Graded Lessons, and one autumn she has a group of children younger than usual, it will be wise to shorten some of the stories. Or suppose a teacher has a foreign group just beginning to understand English, she will certainly have to abbreviate and simplify.¹ There are also stories that should be expanded beyond what is given in the Bible, as that of the shepherds at Christmas time, or that of Jesus and the children. "A reading between the lines," with the use of one's imagination, enables one to enlarge the picture and make it real.

6. Action is required. There must be action in stories for young children; the characters, whether they be birds, animals, or persons, must be *doing* something. The manner of telling the story must be realistic too, and of the active type. Description should wait for a later time. Short, simple sentences telling what each character did and said are most desirable. The story of "The Three Bears" may suggest to the mind the sort of thing for which to seek. It is full of realistic action, so natural to the child mind that it is always a favorite.

¹ In either of these cases it might be well to use instead of the regular Beginners' Course, Object Lessons for the Cradle Roll, by Frances Weld Danielson.

7. Judging the story. It has been said that if a teacher does not like a story, she cannot use it successfully. There is another side to the matter—because you like a story, even a Bible story, that does not make it a good one to tell to a child. It must be judged from his standpoint. Again, the fact that he likes it does not make it right to use it. Apply the same truth here as was applied to songs for little children. Look back also to the lesson about the positive and the negative and remember it in story-telling. A story having evil in it with which a child is not familiar should be excluded. Are children under six years of age familiar with the evil that is pictured in many of the Old Testament stories?

Story-telling is picture work. As things stand before words with a little child, so a picture precedes a story in his interest. When we begin to use words with him, the story should be as near a picture as possible, with many details left out and strong, striking figures put in.

8. Becoming a story-teller. Some are “born story-tellers”—and some are not! But all may become story-tellers if they try hard enough. It has been well said that “nothing but aptitude is borne with one, and aptitude may be developed.” It is a matter of practice, *practice*, PRACTICE. These books will be helpful for study:

How to Tell Stories to Children, by Sarah Cone Bryant.

Stories and Story-Telling, by Edward P. St. John.

The Art of the Story-Teller, by Marie L. Shedlock.

Picture Work, Walter Hervey.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

On what does successful story-telling depend? You may find five things mentioned in this lesson as necessary for success.

What reasons can you name for the repetition of a story to a little child?

State four guides, or principles, in the selection of stories for young children.

LESSON XVIII

TRUTH THROUGH NATURE AND HOME LIFE

As teachers of Beginners we should realize that God's truth is not only in his word but also in his world, that God's out of doors is like an open book, showing his goodness and his love, his protection and his care, and the wonderful things that he has done. Because it is full of *things*, it is nearer the child than the written word in the Book. Through Mother Nature and her children it is possible to reveal truths of very great importance to the child. This was clearly indicated in the nature stories discussed in the last lesson. We will study now how the objects and actions of nature may reveal God to a child. Tennyson's words cannot be too often recalled to our own minds:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

1. Objects of nature. Beautiful objects of nature should be around a child to be looked at, at chance moments. They should not be in the Sunday school room simply for decoration. They need not always be related to a story, although it is necessary for the attention of the children to be directed to them. Always they will bear a silent message. Here in one room is a spray of red berries and one of winter pine; on a corner shelf are some curiously marked stones and crystals, and on the window sill some boxes of seeds just beginning to sprout. And this is a room in a city church. How did these things get there? The leader had asked her two assistants to care for the small seed boxes at their

homes through the week. A friend was in the mountains in the autumn and she was asked to bring the sprays home with her; the stones had been found when the teacher herself was away in the summer; a deserted bird's nest was also brought home and treasured for a time. Every now and then something new was placed where the children could observe it, and some of the old things were laid away for a time. To let the children see the wonderful was a part of this teacher's plan. She borrowed from a kindergarten a bowl of gold fish for one Sunday; in the spring she put oats on some cotton-batting placed on a tumbler full of water, and some water cress seed on a wet sponge, that the children might see growth and change. It was more important for them to see than for her to explain; in fact, it was well for them to feel that of some things we cannot know the why and how.

“Knowest thou what wove yon wood bird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?”

2. In the city Sunday school. City teachers sometimes feel that they cannot get or use natural objects, as can those living in suburban places or in the country. Often this depends on planning ahead and devising ways and means, as in the case above. Children who come from a miserable environment should be especially surrounded with beautiful natural objects in Sunday school and day school, that there they may have at least a little of what their lives ought not to be deprived. Of course the use of objects of nature in teaching is somewhat dependent on locality, as there would be no point of contact in many objects for children who have lived in tenement districts all their lives, and have never even seen the grass growing. This is also true in relation to biblical illustrations drawn from nature. “It is a question how much a

child can get out of the many figures in the Bible which are drawn from pastoral life—a child who has seen sheep only in pictures and knows nothing whatever of shepherds. A child, again, whose only experiences of fishing have been gotten on an occasional picnic, will hardly comprehend the illustrations which Jesus used in teaching the fishermen whom he trained to be ‘fishers of men’” (Weigle). But the term “nature” is more inclusive than we sometimes think. Take what is in the environment of the child—for instance, an apple from the grocer’s barrel. Tell a simple story of its journey before it came into the store and of its home, then cut open the apple, take out the “baby seeds,” and remove the coverings that have kept them safe, and the apple will have a new significance in the eyes of the children. And here they will have an illustration of protection. A helpful suggestion may also come through the comparison of several familiar seeds—peach, pear, orange—and the verse may be used—“God giveth . . . to every seed his own body” (1 Cor. 15. 38). Again, the waterdrops cannot be talked of in relation to sea or river, it may be, but they may be used from the starting point of mother’s teakettle.

3. In the country Sunday school. For the country Sunday school there is an abundance of natural objects. The question here is what to do with them. It may be harder to use available material to advantage in an indirect way, because so seldom have the Beginners a room separate from the rest of the school. But the direct use of nature material will be possible. Sometimes “familiarity breeds contempt” even with young children; but if the familiar is taken and something unfamiliar about it is noted, a feeling of wonder and a sense of joy may be awakened in regard to their surroundings. It is necessary in all teaching to remember that “a repetition of the old and familiar with no new element cannot hold the attention and may even fail to arouse it to a passing look. A presentation of the absolutely new, with no link of connection with past experience, would fail just as completely, for it would be unintelligible. Neither the old

alone nor the new alone can engage the attention. The old alone is flat and stale, and is met mechanically by habit; the new alone is meaningless. But when we can bring the past to bear upon the present; when we can see the old in the new and the new in the old, the new giving life to the old, and the old giving meaning to the new, then interest awakens and the mind is alert.¹ Little poems such as the following, with or without music, will often help to give this life interest:

"Think what a host of queer little seeds,
Soon to make flowers and mosses and weeds,
Are under the leaves and the ice and snow,
Waiting, waiting to grow.

"Think of the roots getting ready to sprout,
Reaching their slender brown fingers about,
Under the leaves and the ice and the snow,
Waiting, waiting to grow.

"Nothing so small, or hidden so well
That God cannot find it and presently tell,
His sun where to shine, and his rain where to go,
Helping, helping them grow."

(Author unknown.)

"Said a little seed hiding under the snow,
'I feel to-day I'd like to grow!'
Said a leaf-bud folded up so tight,
'I'm sure I'll burst before 'tis night!'
Said a bluebird singing in a tree,
'It feels like spring to-day to me.'"

(Edith Crowninshield. Tune in Kindergarten and First Grade. Used by permission.)

4. The value of nature observation. In the volume, Reports of the Kindergarten Committee of Nineteen, entitled

¹ The Pupil and the Teacher, Weigle, p. 143. See also The Point of Contact in Teaching, Du Bois.

"The Kindergarten," the following suggestive account is given of the good that may result from the observation of nature (page 204).

"Then followed these comments" (that is, after a visit to the country and to a farm and some weeks of nature observation in a kindergarten) :

" 'The mother cow takes care of the baby calf.' "

" 'The mother horse takes care of the baby colt.' "

" 'The mother hen takes care of chickens.' "

" 'The farmer takes care of them all.' "

" 'Do mother plants have anything to take care of?' said I. 'The seed babies,' said one child. 'How does she do it?' Then the children told me over again what we had discovered when we were studying seeds—how they were wrapped up to keep them dry and warm, etc. 'Mother takes care of our baby,' said one child. 'What have we to take care of?' I asked. 'Our gardens,' said one; 'Our bunny,' cried another; 'Ourselves,' said Elizabeth, who is possessed of a restive spirit and to whom self-control has meant a struggle. Thus ended our discussion, and I felt that the little nurtured beings who came to us in the fall had felt the quickening touch of the year's experiences and were themselves becoming nurturers." It is to be remembered, as has been brought out in earlier lessons, that nature observation has also specific religious values.

5. Truth through home life. The stories given in Lesson XVI gave some insight into how home life may be used to bring religious lessons to a child. Very often a story is a mirror revealing to the child the real and the ideal, what he is and what he may be. For the youngest Beginners the experiences of home life are the most natural from which to teach them. The following illustration is one of a series of talks on "Helpers for the Home," and may on a special occasion be used in place of a story, or be used in a circle talk.

HELPERS FOR THE HOME

Do you remember how many families of fingers there are

which help to keep the home bright? Mothers', fathers', the servants', and the children's are all workers in the home. I am thinking to-day of some hands which work hard and which help us every day. These hands belong to someone who comes to most of our houses every morning and brings something for breakfast—something which the babies like. Yes, the milk, and the milkman brings it. We could not get along nearly so well—could we?—if the milkman didn't come. O yes, we could get it at the store, or at some house where a great deal was kept; but still a milkman must have brought it there. And how nice it is that there is a worker who brings it right to our doors! The milkman has to get up very early in the morning, so as to get the milk and take it to many houses in time for breakfast; then often he comes again in the afternoon. (If this thought is to be developed in the country, among farmers' children, the same general idea would hold good. In this case the father or the man working on the farm would be doing the good service.) Now, can you think of some other workers for the home, whom we are very glad to have serve us? I know of someone who keeps a store; yes, the butcher, the grocer. We couldn't get our meat or sugar or flour very well, if there were no butcher and no grocer. Yes, of course, we pay these people money. That is for the trouble they take. But we should have a hard time if they did not help us. Perhaps you can think of other helpers, who do other kinds of work for us and help in other ways.

It will be good practice for each student to prepare a talk of this kind, using either a natural object or taking some home helper as the central interest. If a group is working together, these talks should be compared and discussed, finding, if possible, what is good and what is poor about them.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

In what two ways should a teacher of Beginners use natural objects?

On what will the use of natural objects in teaching depend?

What was the moral value of the kindergarten work as reported in this lesson? Do you find more than one value?

LESSON XIX

THE WISE AND UNWISE USE OF PICTURES

EVERYONE realizes the interest of a child in a picture. It may be said to come between things and words. First comes the object, then that which represents it—the picture—and then the words which explain it. An appeal to the eye is far more effective than an appeal only to the ear. A deeper impression is made by what is seen than by what is heard.

1. **The value of pictures in Sunday school teaching.** A picture has two principal uses in Sunday school teaching. It may aid in understanding a story, or it may have a suggestive and silent influence as it hangs on the wall. Of recent years pictures have been used quite generally for the first purpose; the second has not been appreciated as much as it needs to be. One or two beautiful pictures placed where little children can drink in their beauty and truth, little by little, will have an influence that cannot be measured. One realizes this through an experience of repeated observations of children when given such an opportunity. But it may be only now and then that they will pay any heed; at times they will very likely seem quite indifferent. Their interest in and love for a picture may depend on its first presentation, and the association with it, perhaps, of some loved story. Or interest and tender feeling may come simply from what a child interprets to himself as he looks at a picture again and again.

2. **The choice of pictures.** Of course the right kind of picture must be selected, as must the right kind of story. Discrimination is needed. A thing beautiful in itself may not be at all beautiful to a child. Pictures for little children should represent that of which they know something. They should have action in them rather than description. They

should be simple, strong, and clear, without much detail. They should always tell a story, and it should be one that a child can discover at least in part for himself. One of the choice Madonna and Child pictures, of which there are many by the great masters, is eminently suitable for a Beginners' room. They speak of mother love and the repose of the little one in that love. Any three-year-old seeing such a picture will say, "Mamma and baby," with no suggestion from anyone. If the story of the Christ-child is told in relation to it, it has an added significance. After hearing the Christmas story, a little one can see in the picture of "The Holy Night," for example, much that he has heard. He will point to the mother and babe, and to the "grandpa" who has come to see the baby Jesus. After telling the Bible story no word is needed when Plockhorst's picture of "Jesus and the Children" is unveiled before a group. Very gently one and another may come near and point out the person in the picture he likes most to see. Of this type of picture these three will be sufficient to place upon the walls for some months. They should be hung, if possible, near the level of the children's eyes, so that they can be seen with satisfaction.

A good picture in black and white is better than a poorly colored one. There are very few inexpensive colored pictures that are desirable. Among kindergarten pictures there are three that are delicately colored and very suggestive, that may be used in Sunday school with nature and home stories at a fitting time. Two belong to a series of "Sense Pictures" and are entitled "Sound" and "Smell," and the other is one of the "Nursery Rhyme Pictures," called "Hush-a-by-Baby on the Tree Top."

The child's care of animals and love of animals and birds makes good pictures of these subjects very desirable. Some of the best are "Feeding the Chickens," Millet; "Play Days in Holland," Charlet; "St. John and the Lamb," Murillo; and "Feeding Her Birds," Millet.

A series of pictures about nine by twelve inches has been

provided for use with the Beginners series of the International Graded Lessons. Some of these pictures are beautifully colored, and they make a strong appeal to a child's interest in connection with the lesson for which they are intended to be used. Each is a separate picture, so that when mounted they can be used by the teacher in teaching the lessons and be handled by the children. The soft brown Perry Pictures of the "Boston Edition," size ten by twelve inches, or those twenty-two by twenty-eight inches, are also especially pleasing for inexpensive wall pictures. The "picture rolls" that have been used with the International Uniform Lessons cannot be recommended. They are often poor in coloring and form, untrue to Oriental manners and customs, and therefore misleading both to teachers and children, and are frequently of subjects which little children had better not see. Wherever any teacher is compelled to use these lessons with children under six years of age it will be wise not to use the picture roll.

3. Pictures illustrative of stories. Many pictures may serve for immediate illustrative purposes that will not have a permanent value for wall use. If an object cannot be obtained in relation to a story, a picture will be useful in its place.

4. The use of the blackboard. To make a picture on the blackboard (or on a sheet of manila paper) is sometimes helpful in the development of a story, if the subject needs it, and a teacher can draw rapidly and well. Very simple drawings are best. But for a teacher to attempt to represent figures if she is not something of an artist is a mistake, for they are apt to be grotesque and ludicrous. It is better to make three straight marks for three men than to try and draw these, if one does not know how. Such crude representations are accepted by little children, in fact, they may be thus encouraged to make illustrative drawings themselves. Elaborate drawings hinder rather than help them. At first a horizontal line satisfies them for a road, a vertical line for a post, a tree, or a man, as the case may be. A simple little sketch already drawn and hidden from view—by per-

haps a sheet of paper—until the moment in the story when it is needed may be occasionally helpful.

WHERE TO OBTAIN PICTURES

Pictures for use with the International Graded Lessons, Beginners' Course. For use with the first year lessons, there are thirty-eight pictures; for the second year lessons, forty-four, size $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The full set for either year \$2.00. Published by The Methodist Book Concern.

Good picture prints may be secured for one cent and forty half a cent each from the following three companies. Send for catalogues and order by the number assigned to each subject:

The Perry Picture Co., Malden, Mass.; The Brown Company, Beverly, Mass.; Wilde & Co., Boston, Mass.

The larger pictures furnished by the Perry Company and referred to in the text may be purchased for seven cents each, for five or more of the 10×12 inches size, and seventy-five cents each for the 22×28 inches size.

The kindergarten pictures referred to are published by the Milton Bradley Company, price, fifty and twenty-five cents.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Why should pictures be used with Beginners? State three reasons from the study of the lesson.

What are the characteristics of a desirable picture for little children?

What is necessary to consider in the use of pictures?

Think of one value in telling a story with the aid of the blackboard.

If there is no blackboard, and no room for it, what might be done instead?

How will you help a child to preserve the pictures you give him?

LESSON XX

FORMS OF SELF-ACTIVITY

IN earlier lessons we have learned that it is necessary for children to be self-active if they are to grow; that self-activity is just as necessary for growing in goodness as for growing physically strong and, therefore, that opportunities must be provided for expression in connection with their Sunday school work. To show how this may be done is the purpose of this lesson.

1. Word expression. Self-expression is possible in many ways; our thought of it must not be limited. Sometimes teachers think of handwork as the only means; sometimes both parents and teachers seek for word-expression, as if that were the only way for a child to manifest what he has gained. The old adage, "Actions speak louder than words," needs to be remembered and applied here.

For a child to make response in words, in connection with story or talk, is decidedly worth while, but this must come naturally, spontaneously, without forcing and with a gentle leading. Such a response is worth more than a repetition of words that have been told to him. Can you think of the reason why this is so? When a little one does tell what has been told to him, it is of more value for him to do this of his own accord, in association with something that has brought it to mind, than to be urged to it by questions as to what he has learned. Can you give any reason showing that this statement is true? Is it better for a child to tell what has been told to him in his own words, or in the better form of the teacher's words, or, it may be of a Bible verse? Can he be encouraged to do one or the other by the way we teach? If a child will not tell of anything he has been taught, is it a proof that he does not know it?

2. **Expression by handwork.** Good teachers differ in their judgment as to the wisdom of using handwork in Sunday school with Beginners. Those who advocate its use believe that this manual expression deepens the impression in relation to the story told and the truth to be appreciated. Others feel that a little will be better than much of this work for five-year-olds, and that with little ones under five it has small, if any, value in Sunday school. Why is this? Because they can do little to reach any result with tools, such as pencils, chalk and clay. These have their value outside of Sunday school, just because they are used for the sake of the using. Children are absorbed in the process and care little for what comes out of it. When we try to relate a definite thought with their drawing, for example, it is often beyond their power to express it. Therefore, there is no "deepening of an impression." If they do express an idea given, it is usually of some material detail. This may have a value, but it does not deepen the impression of the truth; in fact, it often hinders this, because of an absorption in the particular detail pictured. The question is, What do we wish to impress? *Just as an object may illustrate itself and not the lesson it is meant to illustrate, so handwork may emphasize something that excludes any attention to the more important truth that, under other conditions, would be just as interesting.* This may be true in its use with older children, but the younger the children are, the truer it is. Handwork is a better medium of expression for Primary children than for Beginners; in fact, it is for them one of the best, but there should be always a discriminating use of it. Think of what may be done with Beginners; make a comparative study of the different possibilities, then see how much time there is in Sunday school for the many good things, and use the time to the best advantage. Sewing of outline pictures is discarded in many week-day kindergartens, and it needs to be set aside still more in Sunday kindergartens. The free-hand illustrative drawing of a single leading fact in certain stories is worth while for the older Beginners;

for example, "The father and mother birds *made a nest* for their babies." Do not set a picture before them to copy, or assist in developing their pictures. Let them be original illustrations, either on the blackboard or their individual papers. When serial drawing is done on a blackboard, and each person has a part to do in making a series of objects to form one picture that tells one story, of course the teacher may contribute some part that the children cannot draw. It is best to do this kind of work with a small group of not more than six or eight little ones. Sometimes an outline picture may be colored, but this is nice work to do at home, in relation to the Sunday school. It may be suggested to both parents and children at a good opportunity. The use of clay is inadvisable in Sunday school, in consideration of both time and place. The sand-tray is distracting and of little value here. The right kind of stories do not need it and the free play possibilities in sand, so valuable in home and in week-day kindergarten, have no place in Sunday school. The illustrative work to be done in the sand-tray is much more advantageous for the child of ten to twelve years studying biblical geography than for the child of four to six years in the Beginners' Department. The very best handwork for these little people is the careful mounting, now and then, of pictures that are related to the stories, such as the Perry or Brown pictures (see lesson on pictures). *A half-dozen-page booklet made, it may be, from heavy manila paper by the teacher, with pictures of the Jesus stories placed in it by the child, as the stories are told from time to time, will be a great treasure to take home.* At the bottom of each picture may be lettered by the teacher some sentence connected with it. Have a good library paste—and direct children to use a very little on the pasting sticks—toothpicks will serve for this purpose—and to place it near the edge of pictures or only at the corners. When the International Graded Lessons are used and the folders are taken home Sunday by Sunday, the children should be urged to tie them together and make a book. This is good home work. The additional

book here described may be occasionally made in Sunday school.

3. Expression through representation. We have previously noted a young child's interest in representation and personification. This is the beginning of the interest in dramatic expression, which in its full sense is evident later. First, a child represents by means of things and his own action on these, as, for instance, in his use of his father's cane for a hobby-horse; later on he begins to personify by being himself the character he wishes, at first, of course, in a very simple and crude way. As an illustration, a little child's playing "doggie" may come to some minds. He assumes the character, not through what he is or looks like, but by what he does. This is the difference between the personification of younger and older children. The little one will be "mother," if she has a dolly to put to sleep; the older one will wish to have mother's dress and all the accessories, and the imitation will be more than of the simple action, it will be of the person. Used wisely, this delight in representation may be utilized in Sunday school, especially where moral qualities are suggested through simple dramatic expression, as, for example, when the children are themselves sunbeams and shine in dark corners; when they are parent birds caring for little birds, or when they may be chosen to represent father and mother in their own homes, with such a song as,

"Loving mother, kind and true,
Busy father, he works too."

Generally, this sort of expression can be carried out only where the Beginners are in a room by themselves, and are led by a discerning teacher who will know how to guide, and yet will not introduce all sorts of kindergarten games. She who is not a trained kindergartner may learn what to do by careful observation in a good week-day kindergarten. But it will be better not to use this method of expression unless it can be done naturally.

4. Representative motions. The representation of

motions, such as the ringing of the church bells, the falling rain or snow, and the swaying of the trees, have been frequently used in Sunday school. For physical exercise or for rest they should not be needed in a brief hour session if conditions are right. But as an expression of the idea presented in song or story they may well be used, *if in the right way*. And the right way is not at the same time as singing or attempting to sing. A successful combination is well nigh impossible, and if tried it will be seen that almost all the children are doing one thing or the other. Very often the little ones are absorbed in either the singing or the motion, and if they succeed in carrying out both, one or the other becomes mechanical.

Do you think the truth in the following song would be made more real by some action by a few children, while the rest sing?

“Children, what do the blossoms say,
Down in the garden walk?
They nod and bend in the twilight gray,
Say, can you hear them talk?

“They say, ‘O darling children bright,
We’re going to sleep, good night, good night,
The gentle breezes have come to sing
How God takes care of everything.’”

A variety of action should be planned for, even if it refers only to movement, for example, groups going to the piano to sing, or some of the children standing, while others form “the choir” going in twos and threes to see a picture on the wall, perhaps, and coming back to the circle to tell what was seen. All these things give opportunity for and encourage self-expression. It is this variety that causes a rest because it is change, and so it is not necessary to do anything directly for that purpose. After these things comes the rest of sitting quietly for an eight or ten-minute story period. Usually at the end something will be done that will be a relaxation from

any strain of attention, for example, singing a song, acting out the story, going to see something in the room, the church or garden, or pasting a picture. It is very necessary to remember that little children cannot attend to one thing very long and they should not be overtaxed.

5. Expression through helping. One of the best ways of using the children's self-activity is to let them all do as much for themselves and each other as they possibly can, and to plan ways in which they may be of service in the room. Before Sunday school begins different ones may assist in getting needed material, in arranging chairs, or under guidance they may water the plants, or fill a vase with water for flowers. In turn they may be asked to bring flowers for the room. The older ones may assist the younger in taking off hats and coats. Instead of the teachers distributing picture papers or materials, one or two children may be appointed to do it. There are many little things, such, for example, as getting the contribution basket, that a teacher is tempted to do herself until she realizes how much better it is for a child to do it. The spirit of cooperation and thoughtfulness grows in this way. Some of these things can be done where there are only three or four children in the group and it meets in a corner of the church. Activities for others outside of the group and the room will be considered in the next lesson.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Make a list of different kinds of self-expression.

What is likely to be true when little children do handwork?

What kinds of work may be used to best advantage in Sunday school?

What is the difference between the representations of younger and older children?

Make a summary of the many ways in which self-activity may be utilized in Sunday school.

LESSON XXI

THE OFFERING IN THE BEGINNERS' DEPARTMENT

MANY little children have no idea why they take money to Sunday school. All that is evident is that they like to "give it to teacher" or to drop it in the basket because "all the children do." For them to know the reason of much that they do is quite unnecessary, but this is an instance where they need to understand the purpose, or the offering is useless so far as they are concerned. In the minds of teachers there is one of two reasons, and sometimes both, for this custom. Some think of the good to be accomplished—the cause to be helped by the money that is given, and they seek to make the amount as large as possible. Others think of training the children in being Christians, and find in the offering one means for doing this. Many teachers when questioned would say that they follow this plan for the sake of helping missionary work and also for teaching the children to give.

Let the student consider these questions: Why are little children encouraged to bring money to Sunday school? Why as teachers do we plan for an offering? Is money the best sort of gift for little children to make? Is there any value in a child's carrying a coin from his father's pocket to the Beginners' contribution basket?

So long as the general aim and purpose of the Sunday school is to train in right living, everything that is done should conduce to that end, and "teaching the children to give" is for this reason the primary consideration. The cause for which the money is given should have a secondary or subordinate place in any planning. With this point in view, our plans will be very different from what they are in some schools.

1. **Doing for others.** The interest of the children must be awakened in doing something for some one. The beginnings of Christian training will include the beginning of missionary training. But that does not mean necessarily giving to so-called "missionary objects." Three things must be considered: What is near to the children? What is naturally a part of their experience? About what can they be active? Little deeds of kindness are missionary work for little people. We must not expect them to be altruistic, as their older brothers and sisters may be, but their sympathies are quickly touched and action is healthful. They like "to help," for the sake of doing something and for companionship, more than because of any thought of the other's need. And yet at times the latter is very beautifully and spontaneously shown. To foster a desire to help is the thing to do. Imagine a group of Beginners coming to Sunday school for the first time. The bringing of money should not be suggested at first. There is something better for them to give, something that is more really their own. But even for that they are not ready. It may take weeks to foster a desire. Being helpful will be practiced first in the Sunday school toward the teacher and all the other children, as was suggested in the last lesson. Through conversation and story, suggestions may be made as to helping father and mother at home, not in a general way only, but as regards some definite acts. To fetch father's slippers and to get mother's thimble are deeds of love, real missionary offerings.

There comes a day when one of the group is ill. And the teacher says, "Would it not be nice to send Nellie our flowers that are on the piano?" Two children who live near Nellie are trusted to take these to the door, for an older sister accompanies them. Another day the minister comes to see the Beginners, and after he has gone the question is asked, "Would you like to give the pastor our flowers?" At the close of Sunday school the teacher takes two children to go in search of the minister. These gifts, of course, may not be really the children's, but they should be led to feel ownership

in their little corner, and this is one way of cultivating that, and also of leading them to think of others. At another time the teacher guides them to make a gift that is their own. She tells a story of a child, sick in the hospital a few blocks away. "Next Sunday could you bring something for Jane, that mother would like to have you give her? Perhaps you have a picture, or some pretty shells that some of you brought from the seashore, that you could put in a little box, or, perhaps, you can save an orange." The teacher takes the trouble to write a postal card to each mother telling just what has been proposed, and expresses the hope that each child may be allowed to do something himself, the mother only reminding and guiding. About half the children respond and fulfill the plan. It is very beautiful to see them the next Sunday carry their gifts one by one to a little table in the center of the circle (this serves as an object lesson to the other children) and then all pray:

"We bring these gifts, our Father, for one of thy children who is ill. May they help to make Jane quite well."

2. United giving. The next step is to seek united gift-making by all bringing the same thing; for example, every child is asked to bring one potato and one apple at Thanksgiving time, as "a gift from us all," after hearing of a mother and children who have none. At another time of year all are asked to bring one picture each. The teacher holds up a scrapbook that is "just waiting for some pretty pictures for a little lame boy who can't run about." The next Sunday each child who has brought a picture is given time to paste it in the book, under the guidance of a teacher. A photograph of the boy is placed on the wall: "This is Carl, who likes pictures." It is well for the Beginners' Department or class to do something for the next older children, or for the school as a whole, if all meet together. An interchange between departments is most helpful, as it creates a family feeling and a sense of belonging to the whole. If the Beginners have one large picture, they might loan it to the Primary Department for two or three Sundays, or at Christmas time they might

make such a gift, if their group is a large one, and they bring pennies to Sunday school. Some little children in the country went with their teacher and gathered buttercups for the superintendent's desk, and again for the pastor and the church.

3. The giving of money. When children have been in Sunday school for some time they may be ready to bring offerings of money for some definite purpose, with which they have been made acquainted. This should be something they can fully appreciate, and its fitness will vary according to the particular group and the locality of the Sunday school. If there is an orphans' home near by, or a day nursery, or a kindergarten for children poorer than themselves, something nice can be planned for any one of these. There may be a Home for aged grandmothers that will be of interest. If the Sunday school is in the country, and there is in the parish one "shut in" grandmother, she may be made happy just as much as those in a Home. If the children live in a suburb, and have ridden on the cars to the city, they will quickly understand that some children living there have never played on the grass, and will be eager to have them go for a visit in the country. A picture poster showing these different interests will be of help. First one picture and then another may be added, as the gifts are made to different persons. Everything that is done should be made real to the children, and they should have a hand in it, whenever it is possible—wrapping gifts, carrying them, if they are to go near by, or seeing the box in which they are to be sent, if going some distance. How one group did enjoy seeing the baby clothes that their pennies had bought for a one-year-old Alice whose picture they had seen, and who did not have a mother to make any clothes for her!

4. The word offering. Does the word "offering" suggest more to a teacher than the word "contribution" or "collection"? If so, of what does it speak? With these little children it will not be necessary to use any one of these words, but to speak simply of gifts. If, however, one is used, let them grow familiar with the term "offering," which may well

be made use of also in the other departments of the school. The bringing of gifts needs to be associated with worship, and the offering has a natural connection with many of the Bible stories. As the children grow older it may have a very beautiful significance; any deed of love is an offering, not only to the one to whom it is given, but to Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25. 40). Even young children may know the words, "Bring an offering, and come into his courts" (Psa. 96. 8).

5. Receiving the offering. There are several ways of taking up the offering and variety of action adds interest. Sometimes, a little box or basket is placed in the center of the circle, and the children go, one by one, to drop in their pennies, or one child (perhaps two, if there are two baskets, and the circle is large) passes the basket to gather up the gifts. Again, the children may march around and drop in their money, as the teacher or some child holds the basket. March music is desirable with the last plan, and some soft, pretty piece when the others are used. If a song about giving is sung, it is best to do this before or after one of these plans. A good offertory song for little children is much needed. In some that are used there is danger of unintentional misrepresentation, and consequent misunderstanding because children are very literal. For instance, when the following is said or sung, there is a likelihood of confusion.

"So we bring our offerings to Jesus,
And cheerfully give them to-day;
When *placed in his hand for a blessing*,
They'll comfort some child far away."

Or, when that overused, outworn jingle is sung, beginning, "Hear the pennies dropping" and ending, "He will get them all," there is a possible untruth from the standpoint of the children's way of thinking, for, as a child says, "He doesn't get 'em!" It is well to have a short and very specific prayer after the bringing of gifts, such as the one suggested earlier

in the lesson, or, "We thank thee for our apples and potatoes; make us glad to give some to the mother and children who have not any," or, "For thy gifts, our Father, we thank thee; help us to share our good things."

5. Birthday gifts. As soon as the little ones are in the habit of bringing money offerings, a very pleasant custom may be established in relation to birthdays. The child who has had a birthday brings on the following Sunday as many pennies as he is years old. These may be used for the immediate purpose in which the group is interested at the time, or they may go into a "birthday bank," to be used in some special way at Christmas, or at some other season. There are advantages and disadvantages in the last plan. Christmas is so far away from some birthdays many children do not realize then that their pennies are in the bank. On the other hand, this fund gives them an opportunity to make a gift at Christmas time, which otherwise they could not do. The recognition of the birthdays in other ways will be considered in the lesson on "Special Days."

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

What should be the first consideration in any offering?

How should the teacher be guided in choosing objects to which little children shall give?

What would you include in missionary work for them?

LESSON XXII

CONTROLLING YOUNG CHILDREN

PHILLIPS BROOKS has shown how freedom is the natural outcome of the law of liberty,¹ how when a person yields to that law and becomes himself a part of it, he is free and full of joy; when he opposes and resists it he feels restraint. Of course such a yielding in its fullness can come only with the growth of years, but before a child comes to the period of the strongest self-assertion—when there must be inevitably more or less struggle—he may be guided usually to a happy acquiescence in “what we all do.” Control that is not seen nor consciously felt and yet is a quiet force, keeping a happy balance that issues in obedience to law and in freedom, is the ideal toward which to work. Individuality is not so strongly marked at three or four years as it will be later, and the child of this age is still largely *one with his social environment*, if it be natural and right. Rebellion generally comes when the environment—including requirements—is all wrong. While not lessening the truth of the old saying, “If you are good you will be happy,” the kindergartner has proven another, “If he is happy, he will be good.” Besides all this, it is well to think of the words of a leading educator, “If a child never cries in your kindergarten, I do not wish to send my child there.” It will not do, either, to make it always perfectly easy for a child to be good. Previous studies have shown that we must give opportunity for effort on his part.

1. **In the Beginners’ room.** Seek to apply these principles to the Beginners’ Sunday school. What sort of an environment is necessary? What sort of control will then be needed? Why is a kindergarten where a child never cries undesir-

¹ The Candle of the Lord and other Sermons. The Law of Liberty.

able? Can you imagine a home where a child never cries? In the Sunday school, control will be easier and more natural if there is the right atmosphere, literally and figuratively. Little children will be restless, noisy and often disobedient when a room is full of bad air or is overheated. Proper ventilation assists control. A restful atmosphere is found in an orderly, pleasing arrangement of the furnishings and decorations. If it is possible to have neutral tints of color on the walls and to do away with brilliant combinations, the general order and spirit of the children is likely to be better. An untidy room is apt to have a disturbing effect; so also is a crowded room and overmuch decoration. In a certain room, good in itself, were strung chains of paper of all the colors of the rainbow that gave a gala effect suitable for a party but not at all conducive to a spirit of reverence. In another the artistic arrangement of plants, pictures, and work of the children had a good effect on the little ones, of which they were not conscious. Observation, and if anyone pleases, a direct test for some weeks, will prove the truth of what has been said.

2. Music a means of control. Music is an effective means of control, as indicated in the lesson on "Little Children Singing." Spirited music may attract the attention of a group which is noisy before Sunday school begins; sweet and gentle music following will have a quieting influence. Children can be trained to obey the call of the piano and will respond to it more readily than they will heed the human voice. One Sunday will differ very much from another as regards the need of a controlling influence; a group that usually responds easily and happily may be on some particular day altogether upset. The moods of little children vary very much, as is evidenced by the fact that they turn suddenly from smiles to tears and *vice versa*. They are "sensitive plants" and are affected by each other, by the weather, by the conditions of a room, by the kind of music, and last but not least, by the temper and attitude of the leader.

3. The teacher who controls. A calm, gentle, but strong

personality controls usually with few words and little so-called "discipline." It is remarkable how sometimes the quiet person, who is also bright, can win what a more vigorous nature will never gain. A loud, harsh, irritated voice will do more harm than good. It may bring a temporary quiet, but results in no permanent value, and often noise creates noise. An excited, even though pleasant manner is undesirable. A good, earnest, but very energetic and impulsive woman, lacking a calm and gentle spirit, once had charge of a Beginners' Department. A discerning mother spoke her mind to the superintendent: "She gives me such a feeling of restlessness I don't wonder the children are not reverent. I wish my boy might be under some better spiritual influence." This mother had discovered what many fail to appreciate, the *power of the teacher to make or mar a reverent atmosphere.*

4. Direction more than restraint. The leader needs to direct the activities of the children rather than to restrain or repress them. Occasionally restraint—a holding back—will be wise, but if the children are continually conscious of this, it will be irksome and cause dislike and perhaps rebellion. A constant repression is unnatural and harmful. Children do wrong often because there is no channel provided for the rightful exercise of their activity. Trouble may be saved by a wise foresight of what is needed by the group or by an individual child. A wise arrangement as to the seating of the children will also save possible trouble. Managing children is an art. They will conform and respond to what is desired, at least in many instances, according to the way it is asked or expected.

5. Discipline for a child's own good. But the best of plans will not always work. There are exceptions to every rule, and under the most desirable conditions there will come times of disobedience, disorder, and wrongdoing. Control must be exercised on the negative side. To allow one child, or more, to continue in irreverence and disobedience is not only a failure to do good, but an absolute wrong to the child

and a harm to the rest who are behaving well. Turn back in thought to the lesson on cultivating a spirit of obedience and think of the danger of letting a habit of disobedience grow. Every time anyone disobeys, it is made more easy for him to do it again. Whatever is right in the week-day kindergarten in the way of discipline is right in the Beginners' Sunday school. If punishment is never needed, it must be an unnatural place. Can we imagine a home without discipline? The great consideration is to find means of discipline that meet the individual needs and that will be a means of good. Sometimes a kindergartner will set an unmanageable child apart from the rest and do it so frequently that he cares nothing about the isolation. Be sure of one thing: no punishment should be given which a child does not mind. Of course there may be an apparent "don't care," and to discriminate between the two requires a keen insight. Elizabeth Harrison has well said, "Punishments, rightly considered, are not merely an atonement for offenses committed, but they show the nature of the offense and help the individual to build up the law within, and thereby avoid repeating the misdeed. The child must be led from the unconscious to the conscious choosing of such lines of conduct as he is to pursue. . . . We rob our children of one of the greatest aids to self-government and self-control when by any means whatsoever we free them from the consequences of their wrongdoing."¹ Control with firmness and gentleness combined; ask only what is reasonable for little children, and expect that to be fulfilled; if it is not, let some consequence be suffered; but be sure you are just, treating all alike and fairly.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Name six things mentioned in the lesson affecting control.

What are the characteristics of a teacher who has good control?

What is the purpose of punishment?

¹ Study of Child Nature, p. 116.

LESSON XXIII

SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF A BEGINNERS' DEPARTMENT

As we have stated before, the Beginners' Department should be organized and administered as a separate department, wholly apart from the other departments of the school. It should enroll children of Beginners' age only. If the department numbers more than twelve, one assistant teacher will be desirable; if it numbers as many as forty, three assistants will be better than one; if there are more than forty children in attendance, it will be wise to have two distinct groups with a teacher in charge of each, just as in large public schools there are two or more kindergarten classes. In this lesson the successful management of a Beginners' Department numbering forty to fifty members will be considered. Adaptation can be made for smaller or larger groups. One thing more in regard to numbers needs to be noted: it is not wise for the greatest good to admit more children than the room and the seating will comfortably allow; the good of the majority rather than the good of an individual should be thought of, and it is impossible to give what the children need if they are crowded into half of the space they should rightfully have. If in a mission school a larger number seek entrance than can be accommodated, plan for two separate sessions of the Department.

1. The superintendent and her assistants. There will be one head teacher of the Department, called the Beginners' superintendent. Others will act as her assistants. It is best for these little children to be kept in one group and taught by one person. She should have entire control of them and be responsible for all that is done; she should have charge of the room and all arrangements should be referred to

her. Her most important qualifications have been pictured in other lessons. Besides being the right sort of person to sympathize with and guide little children, she should have some executive ability for the management of details, and some power to win and guide assistants, so that they shall be real helpers. If younger women are with her, there is a great opportunity of leading them to an ideal of motherhood, and to consecration to a noble service.

An assistant may well sit with the circle group and co-operate in all the service, but she should not attempt any control of the children, except as it is asked, nor should she be expected to teach. A well-intentioned effort to stop some children talking, or to avoid disturbance, often makes more than the original trouble. With wisdom and tact she will choose a place to sit that will prevent disturbance, and will occasionally see the need of changing her place. She of the bright eyes and tactful sense will quickly note the incoming of a stranger, a late child, or an adult visitor and will see them to their rightful places. She will be on the alert to do the needful thing without making any noise about it. A real aptness is necessary on the part of an assistant for doing little things well.

If three assistants are selected, each should be delegated to particular duties. One will be the pianist, another can act as secretary and treasurer, and the third have charge of the materials and of the place where hats and coats are left, besides all three cooperating in the interest of the hour. One essential characteristic of an assistant is that she be reliable. If a young girl can be depended on, is earnest and interested, she may develop into the right kind of worker more easily than an older person.

2. The pianist. Besides being a children's musician, as emphasized in the lesson on singing, the pianist should assist the leader by the needed expression from the piano at the right moment, by practicing with the assistants the new songs, by being present to play before the beginning of the session and by having charge of the music books. She should

be one who has a real sympathy with every part of the work, remembering that the music is a part, and all must be unified.

3. Administrative detail. The records of the Beginners' Department should include, first, a record of new pupils, to be filled out by parents. Enrollment blanks suitable for this purpose should provide space for the name of the child, name of parents, parents' church membership, address, age, birthday, date of entering the department, class assignment (first or second year), and miscellaneous information. This information should be kept on file, either in a book or on cards. Second, a record of attendance should be kept, the record to be made quietly by the secretary or a helper, without roll call. To aid prompt and regular attendance the names may be placed on a sheet of cardboard, with spaces opposite each name. Gilt stars may be attached to indicate attendance, and the children who come early may be allowed to place their own stars. Third, a record of absentees should be kept, and cards with the names of the absent children on them, containing also spaces for stating the cause of the absence, should be put in the hands of those responsible for the absentees. Fourth, a record of birthdays is desirable. This enables the teacher to mail a birthday letter or card to each child at the proper time. Fifth, a visitors' register may be kept for all those who come into the department from time to time.

The Beginners' Department expenses should be met in the same way as those of the other departments of the school, preferably by the church, the offerings of the Department in turn to go to the church and to benevolent causes. A stipulated allowance for the Department helps the superintendent and teachers to plan their expenditures more wisely.

4. Supply of material. It will be an economy of time, trouble, and possibly expense, if an estimate is made of materials required for a year or half a year, and the purchase of the same made at the beginning. In one school a certain amount of money was allowed from the Sunday school budget to the Beginners' Department. Paper, cardboard,

paste, pencils, and chalk were procured through one firm. The closet was stocked with what was necessary, and this business disposed of for some months. The superintendent should attend to this with the assistant, but the latter may well do the mechanical work and get a practical training through the assistance given. It should be the latter's duty to see that the material needed for each Sunday is taken out and placed ready for use, and returned to the closet at the end of the session. This closet needs to be kept in order for convenience, and also because of the bad effect of untidiness upon the children. The person for this work, therefore, needs to be orderly, systematic in the management of details, and if she assists in the use of materials for decoration, she should be one who has an artistic eye for simple and beautiful effects. In all that is done the superintendent must be the guide, supervisor, and inspirer. While she may appoint certain ones to this work and that, it must be in cooperation with herself. The best results will come if she have the mother spirit with her teachers as well as with her children, and if these helpers feel the true family relationship in the work. To accomplish it successfully, all will have to meet together frequently, to discuss plans and to carry them out.

5. Hour for the session. If the Beginners meet at the same time as the rest of the school, it may be, of course, in the morning before church, at noon, or in the afternoon. The choice between these depends largely on the conditions of the immediate locality and church. From the standpoint of the little child, the morning is the best time for Sunday school. Immediately after church, if he has sat through a long service, is the worst time. In some churches in recent years the morning church hour has been used for the Beginners' Sunday school. This has advantages and disadvantages. The children are fresh for Sunday school and more time can be devoted to it. They are saved from the long sermon, their parents are free to enjoy it, and they can go from home and back with those parents who attend church. The disadvantages are that the family is separated during the church

service, the children have no experience of church attendance, and their teachers are prevented from any participation. The more ideal way has been practically fulfilled here and there. It is to have the little ones present at church with their parents for the opening service, and then by eleven o'clock to have a processional, when children and teachers quietly pass to the Sunday school room. Those who do not attend church go directly to the Beginners' session. This plan has all the advantages of the one previously described, except that of time, and it overcomes some of the disadvantages. Its distinctive value is the relationship of the children, as part of the church family, to its worship, while it saves them from a portion which they cannot enter into or understand. Of course, in churches where the rooms are so near that the children would disturb the church service, either of these plans would be undesirable.

6. Relationship with the whole school. The family feeling of both church and school needs to be cultivated. The little ones should be led to feel that they belong to a larger whole. One way of doing this is to have them join the larger school on special occasions. An objection to separate departments and graded lessons has been made on the basis that the unity of the whole was thereby broken. Undoubtedly in some places there has been a loss of *esprit de corps* under new methods, but that is because they have not been rightly carried out. While uniformity has gone, unity should be kept. If the Beginners do meet before the rest of the school, they can be kept *occasionally* to pass into the large room for a few minutes of the opening service, in which they should then have some share; and in services for special days (aside from the Sunday school hour), such as those at Christmas and Easter, they should, of course, join. For the good of the whole, teachers of the younger departments need to feel that they belong to the school and should be loyal to it, working for its good, with the same interest as for their own work. To do this to the best advantage some intelligent knowledge of what is being done in other departments is

needed, with an understanding of the lessons to be taught and the aims to be realized in the next higher department. Specialization is dangerous when it means that the teacher of little children cares only to know child life under six years. Imagine a gardener who pays heed to the first sprouting tendrils, and to the roots that go down into the ground, but is indifferent to the beauty of the after-growth! The truest teacher is the one who cares so much for her children that she knows what should happen after her work with them is done, watches to see what does happen, and keeps an interest in them as they come to the years for definite Christian confession.

A superintendent managing her own department will be subject to the advice of the general superintendent of the school and will consult with him.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

What advantages are there in having the Beginners' Department in session during the latter part of the morning church service?

What is a good plan as regards leadership and assistance in the Beginners' Department?

How may the Beginners be led to feel their relationship to the church and the rest of the Sunday school?

LESSON XXIV

HOME COOPERATION

THE success of the Beginners' teacher will depend in no small measure upon the extent to which she interests and secures the cooperation of the parents. The importance of cooperation between Sunday school and home cannot be over-emphasized.

1. What one teacher did. One Beginners' teacher who attained unusual success attributed it very largely to knowing and winning the interest of the parents of her pupils. Through knowing them she became acquainted with the home life and the influences which surrounded her little ones. She found this of much advantage in her teaching. Through knowing the parents she gained their help. Through knowing her they learned of her aim and effort, as otherwise would have been impossible. She was too busy during the week to visit some twenty homes early in the year, but when Sunday school opened in the autumn letters were written by her and her assistants, asking three things: (1) That the parents would visit the Sunday school; (2) that as opportunity offered, they would introduce themselves to her if not already acquainted; (3) that they would fill out the inclosed blank. On this report blank spaces were left opposite the following hectographed words: Name? Age? Date of birth? Address? Father's first name? Occupation of father? Parents, attendants of church? Members of church? Any other member of family a Sunday school attendant? The letter ended with the expression of a wish to help the children as much as possible, and to do this the cooperation of every father and mother would be needed. In the second month an invitation was sent to each mother to attend an "Afternoon Tea" in the Sunday school room. Half an hour was spent socially, and half an hour was used by the teacher in telling of her plan of work for the fall term and what she hoped

to do; also, in showing how the mothers could help to accomplish this.

2. A variety of plans. With different groups of parents these things would have to be done differently. Of course in a mission school neither the first nor the second could be carried out just as they are described here. A simple form of letter for a school of this kind would be: "Sunday school begins next Sunday. We hope William will come promptly at two-thirty o'clock and we shall be glad if his father and mother can come too." In what ways, if any, could the suggested report blank be simplified? In some communities the name, "Afternoon Tea" would bring out a larger number of mothers than to ask them to come simply to a mothers' meeting. In many churches it would be helpful to mothers to discuss the religious life of little children; for example, illustrations may be given of some of the beautiful prayers and hymns that may not be familiar to them. A young mother said at one such gathering, "I wish I knew the best way to begin to teach my child about God and Jesus." Several others asked for prayers that would be best to use.

The following books will be helpful in preparation for mothers' meetings:

Child Nature and Child Nurture, by St. John.

As the Twig Is Bent, by Chenery.

The Dawn of Character, by Mumford.

The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child, by Mumford.

On the Training of Parents, by Ernest H. Abbott.

How to Know Your Child, by Scott.

Your Child To-day and To-morrow, by Gruenberg.

Notebook of an Adopted Mother, by Davids.

In some cases an evening meeting will be more successful than one held in the afternoon. If the mothers are hard-working women, inside or outside of the home, they may be able to get away better in the evening. To mothers such as these, a social evening with helpful suggestions as to home training, will sometimes prove a real pleasure. It has been

found in some places to be an event looked forward to. If occasional meetings can be held for both fathers and mothers, more will be accomplished. Quarterly meetings of the parents with the teachers will be of more help. In many places in connection with the public schools, associations of parents and teachers have been formed. If a similar organization could be arranged in relation to the Sunday school as a whole, or representing one department, and if meetings of both Sunday school and public school were held once a month, it would mean that parents were giving only a few hours for the educational interests of their children. To have an interchange of ideas is worth much.

3. The development of sympathy and understanding. The individual and personal touch of teacher and parent will mean more than all else toward the development of sympathy. An exchange of visits will give opportunity for a better understanding on both sides. Acquaintance with the parents of an individual child and an insight into the home life will reveal the cause of certain conditions for which in Sunday school perhaps no reason could be found. Time is so limited for the desired training that it is necessary to have the assistance of the parents from week to week if the best results are to be gained. It would be most helpful if, where there is a real Christian interest, the home and Sunday school could follow the same general plan of instruction. The most practical way for this to be carried out at present is to have the hymns and songs used in Sunday school taught carefully at home, and for the mothers to help the children to do what the teacher has asked for, in relation to the stories. A note to the mother pinned on to the dress of the little one is the surest way of getting the desired result, if a child is to do anything at home, or bring anything to Sunday school. In connection with the use of the International Graded Lessons, Beginners' Course, the mother should read the stories to the children, and carry out the suggestions in "The Mother's Part." New pupils should be given "Mother's Letter" to carry home.

4. Securing definite cooperation. Adults, as well as chil-

dren, grow interested in a work in and for which they are actively doing something. So it is well to think of things which different parents may be asked to undertake. A father, who was a carpenter, was really pleased to put up shelves for a closet in one Sunday school room. A young mother was ready and eager to assist at one of the Sunday school parties. That was the beginning of her interest. There was a beautiful Christmas picture in one of the children's homes, and both for the sake of having the picture and of interesting the parents, the teacher asked if they would loan it. It was allowed to remain on the walls of the Beginners' room for a month. The father came to see how the teacher was going to use the picture and afterward offered to hang it. There is an opportunity in this sort of thing that should be borne in mind. In homes connected with the larger churches suitable pictures may be found that might be loaned for at least a single Sunday. In this there would be a double value—the use of the picture and the interest of the parents. After various plans have been tried, let us not be discouraged if, as teachers, we do not get a response from all the parents. The cooperation of a few will be worth the effort, for as they help us increased opportunity is offered for us to help them, and there will be an increased effect for good in the lives of the children.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

What would you do to secure the cooperation of the parents?

How can frankness be tactfully gained between parent and teacher?

Sum up the possible results from friendship with the parents of the children. At least four may be found.

Apply the principle of the point of contact to a plan for a mothers' meeting for an uneducated and hard-working group.

Consider what differences should be made for a company of mothers with more education.

LESSON XXV

SPECIAL FESTIVAL DAYS

THE Sunday celebrations of the religious festival days have been referred to in several lessons. They should be especially beautiful in song and story and, rightly, will often be the climax of what has been thought of for weeks. A special recognition in the way of a little gift will be nice for some groups, particularly those whose children come from homes where there is little to enjoy. Such a gift may be a picture or a pretty card with a suitable verse, and at Easter, a small plant or a flower. At Thanksgiving, one group received colored envelopes "to be opened at Thanksgiving breakfast," and those children who waited for the opening were pleased to find a brightly colored card with the words, "Every good gift comes from the Father."

1. **The Sunday school party.** We need to think especially now of week-day celebrations. Just to have a good time with the children, to play games with them now and then, will make the Sunday work more successful. A party is usually a delight to any child, and to some little children the Sunday school party will give what is denied in other ways. With any group it should be simple, but pretty and full of fun. "Dressing up" should be avoided; there are always children who cannot have as dainty clothes as some others, and often when "best things" are worn, fun is lessened. To those who go to many parties, more elaborate than a Sunday school affair could be, and to whom a party has always meant ice cream, something on a simpler scale but just as pretty makes a pleasant surprise. Memory recalls the delight of some little people over individual molds of orange jelly surrounded with whipped cream, on a kindergarten table that was arranged in yellow.

2. **A Thanksgiving party.** If a party is given at Thanksgiving time, the offering by the children of fruits and vege-

tables, or of things for a dinner, can be better brought than than on Sunday. A few minutes may be devoted to packing these, with the help of the children, to make real to them just what will be done with the gifts. The room decorated with autumn leaves, sheaves of corn, and bunches of oats and wheat will be attractive. It is a good plan sometimes to ask a few Intermediate girls and boys to do this decorating "for the little children," or two or three of the young mothers may be asked to help. A table in yellow is as good as any color for this autumn time and the refreshments may harmonize. The nicest way is to have the group seated at the table for this most important part of the party. Either of the following simple blessings is good:

"Father, thank you for this food,
Bless us, help us to be good."

(Tune in Kindergarten and First Grade, April, 1916.)

"Thou art great and thou art good,
And we thank thee for this food;
By thy hand must we be fed,
Give us, Lord, our daily bread. Amen."

(Tune in The Little Child at the Breakfast Table, by William
and Mary Gannett.)

Familiar ring games, such as "Drop the Handkerchief," and plays of finding a hidden object, or running a race on the outside of the circle by two children, starting in opposite directions, are more fun than many kindergarten games unfamiliar probably to a part of any Sunday school group. Exception may be made to the so-called sense games of tasting, smelling, and feeling, when blindfolded, for these are likely to be appreciated the first time they are played. Various ways of marching, running, and skipping are always of interest. After the play has continued some time a story that cannot have a place on Sunday will be listened to with delight. A few toys in corners of the room will be nice for

the youngest children who do not care for the games and for any of the group when they first come.

3. A Christmas party. It is always well for the Beginners, if they number over twenty-five, to have a Christmas celebration separately from the rest of the school. A smaller group may join with the Primary Department if that has not more than that number. Where there are not more than eight or ten children representing both groups, it might be advisable to have a Christmas afternoon party for them in some home. A Sunday school entertainment for the rest of the school is not so fitting either as to time or character for the youngest children.

The Christmas party may be similar to that for Thanksgiving. There may be games, stories, and songs with an offering for children less fortunate and less well provided for than themselves. The games may be those played at the Thanksgiving party. The songs should be Christmas carols. The stories should be appropriate to the Christmas season. There may be one story of the baby born on Christmas day and one of little children who kept his birthday by giving gifts for his sake. Following the story, the children may march with the toys or fruit which they have brought for the children in some family or home and place them under the Christmas tree. Then may follow the Christmas treat.

4. The celebration of birthdays. Besides the little birthday service on Sundays that has been referred to in other lessons, some teachers may find it possible to make recognition of the birthdays in some other way. It may be a tiny note delivered by the postman on the day, for getting a letter does please a four-year-old and a bright little message of love will add more pleasure to the day. But even a note sent to each one takes much time, if there are a large number of children, so in some cases, a suitable picture card may be more advisable. Another plan is that of having a birthday party once a quarter, or even once a month, when all the birthdays that have come during that time may be celebrated. The group of birthday children are given the best places

by the others and are allowed to choose the games. At the same time they are led to think of entertaining the other children in the best way possible, just because they are the honored ones. In some schools, where the children come from homes in which birthday parties and many other things are given, such celebration is not so desirable as in places where the coming together in this way will be a bright spot in a little life and will be a social opportunity for doing much good. The birthday songs to be sung at Sunday school, or at the week-day party, are listed with the other songs.

5. A day in the woods. A day in the woods in the spring will have special value for all classes of children, because of their love of nature and the opportunity which this presents to the Beginners' teacher. It will be of most interest, of course, to those who cannot go often or ever to the country. To go as a party of little children will be far better than just to go to a picnic of the entire Sunday school. If it is not possible to take a group to the country, take them to the park as the next best thing. This outing could be one of the birthday celebrations, if such a plan were being followed. The observations made by the way can be utilized in the Sunday talks as opportunity offers.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

What is the value of a children's Sunday school party?

What additional values are there in the Thanksgiving and Christmas parties?

Write in your notebook the characteristics of a three-year-old as discovered at a party; of a five-year-old. Make a note of all the good points you can find in the kind of Christmas party described.

LESSON XXVI

THREE GROUPS OF BEGINNERS

IN this last lesson a pen picture will be given of Beginners in Sunday school, under very different conditions. One Sunday's work will be described with —(1) A group of Beginners that forms a department in a large suburban church; (2) a group in a city mission; (3) a group in a rural church, composed of Primary children and Beginners.

1. Sunday school in a suburban church. I stood at the entrance of a Beginners' room a few minutes before the Sunday school opened. A few children were looking at some picture books lying on a corner table; two or three were seated in the circle of chairs arranged in the center of the room. Two of the oldest girls were helping some younger ones put their wraps in the dressing room. An assistant teacher moved about among the children, asking one and another to help her. Two who were not doing anything were soon busy with her, watering the window boxes. In a few minutes she called two others to carry materials for her. Another hung some cards by hooks already placed for them. A large card with little gilt stars on it told of the attendance of some forty children. Another assistant had charge of that, and with her help, each child, as he entered, put a star opposite his own name, to which the teacher pointed.

The leader and a number of children soon came in, and the piano was played for five minutes before the time of beginning Sunday school. During the music the books were put away and the blackboard made clean, and the children gradually took their seats in the circle. The playing of a chord as "the clock pointed the hour" was the signal for all to be quiet, and anyone who came in after that sat in one of a row of chairs in the corner of the room until after the

first few minutes, when the leader called him to his place. Each member had his own chair, and there were some places left for those who came now and then, or for newcomers. After a second piano signal all arose, and "Good-morning to our Sunday school" was sung. Then as the piano played the tune of "Father of all, in heaven above," all heads were bowed and the prayer was sung very softly. "George" was asked to bring a picture of a child that was on a side table, and Sallie to get the basket for the offering. It was necessary to take up this offering soon so that the hands might be free. If any child had brought his offering uncovered it was placed in a box when he went to put his star on the attendance card. Otherwise attention would have been distracted from the greeting song and the prayer. A few words followed about three-year-old Edith, a needy child for whom the children had been asked to bring gifts—"little things not too big to go into the basket." All who had anything to give her ran one by one, and put it in the basket. The variety of gifts was interesting to see—a marble, a tiny doll, several pictures, a stick of candy, a penny, some "buttons for her dress" and a hair-ribbon. Then all repeated after the leader, "Father in heaven, bless Edith and make her happy," and afterward stood and sang, "Our Father sends his blessing from above."¹ One of the boys had his birthday pennies, so he came and dropped them—one, two, three, four, five—into a little jar. As he stood by the teacher the children sang,

"A birthday song we gaily sing,"²

and then Miss Jessie prayed,

"We thank thee, heavenly Father,
For all the loving care
That thou hast given James
At home and everywhere.

¹ Second verse of "Bless our Gifts," in *The Children's Hour of Story and Song*, by Sara Bullard Moffatt.

² By "J. L. B.," in *Primary and Junior Songs for the Sunday School*.

"For five years thou hast guarded him,
Asleep, at work, at play.
O Father, love and care for him,
On this and every day!
Amen."¹

Next all were asked to look at the pictures around the room and one child could go to the one he liked very much. Ernest jumped up quickly and touched the picture of a mother dove and "her little ones three." The children sang,

"Happy as a robin,
Gentle as a dove,
That's the sort of little child
Every one will love."²

and one of the assistants sang to them,

"High up in the old pine tree
Lived a mother-dove and her little ones three."³

It was "Palm Sunday," and the teacher talked for a few minutes about the trees and the many ways in which they are a help. She let some of the children be trees and each chose the way he would like to help: "Make it shady," "Be a home for birdies," "Have fire wood," "Have apples." They went back to the circle and all were "trees" waving branches for a minute or two.

When they were again seated and very quiet, the teacher brought a palm branch from the closet, and said she had a story about some little children who had palm branches in the country where Jesus lived a long time ago. One Sunday something beautiful happened: every one was so glad to see Jesus they said, "Let us have a procession as he rides into the city." He came riding on a young donkey and the men, women, and children took palm branches, and they gathered

¹ By Anna L. Johnson.

² By Emilie Poulsson and Laura Collin (adapted from) In Songs for Little People.

³ "Little Doves," in Kindergarten Chimes, author not given.

around him, singing "Hosanna, Hosanna." That meant "Praise him, praise him" and they were happy because Jesus had come. (See story in Teacher's Textbook, International Graded Lessons, Beginners' Series, if further detail is desired.)

The teacher then sang,

"With joy to-day we march and sing
And raise our palms on high;
And to our Saviour praises bring,
With happy voices cry,
'Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna in the highest,
To Christ our king!'"

"Now," said the leader, "it is time to say good-by. You may come one by one and shake hands to-day, and I will give you a picture to take home; you can see if you know of what it tells." (*Picture of children carrying palm branches as Jesus rides by.*)

2. **Sunday school in the city mission.** There were thirty in the Beginners' class in the mission and only a small side room into which they could go, so the teacher seated them in a double row around two thirds of a circle. They were children of foreign parentage and knew little English. The room had been made as bright and homelike as possible to begin with, and more was to be done later. The walls were dirty, but half way up the teacher had covered them with a pretty shade of green denim and at the top edge she had made a conventional design of red paper poppies, having obtained a pattern from a day-school teacher. A geranium that stayed at a neighbor's house all the week was on the one window sill.

Miss Blake decided that at first she must teach these children almost altogether by pictures. And if she wanted them to know God's love it must be through the best she could picture to them of father and mother love in action. So on this Sunday we have in mind, Miss Blake had a series of

pictures. She held up one of mother cat and kittens and some of the children named it in Italian, showing by the light on their faces that they knew of what the picture spoke. She pointed to the big cat and said "Mother" and they knew that word. Next, she showed one of a mother hen and chickens. The children laughed, and one little girl ran and put her finger on the hen and said "*Madre*." Then Miss Blake showed the picture of the "Two Mothers and Their Families," by Elizabeth Gardner-Bouguereau, in which there are a mother and child and a hen and chickens and said: "Two mothers loving," holding up two fingers and putting her arm around a child for "loving." Next came the picture "A Wee Bit Fractious," which shows a mother with her tired child in her arms, and again she said "Mother loving." The last picture was of a father and child and the emphasis was on *father*. As this teacher set the pictures down she said, "Children, God loves us, like father and mother." (They knew the word "God").

Then very softly she sang,

"God is loving, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so,"

holding the Bible in her hand (just the two lines—not the whole song or verse).

3. Sunday school in a rural church. The building was an old-fashioned church, with one large audience room. The Sunday school session followed the church service. Sufficient time was allowed between the two sessions to have the room aired, and the attention paid to this was interesting to see: some one knew that oxygen was necessary for spiritual good. Six little red chairs were placed in a semicircle in front of the first bench, for there were six members of the school under six years of age, and regularity of attendance was encouraged by each having his own chair put in the same place for him every Sunday. Some flowers stood on a table near the superintendent's desk: they had been brought by the children. It was the season for daisies, and so each

child had been asked for this particular day to bring a few from the fields and in this bringing the teacher had shared. "Nearer, My God, to Thee" played on the cabinet organ suggested to every one that this was the time to be quiet. At the end of a few strains, all heads were bowed, while a choir of boys sang,

"The Lord is in his holy temple,
Let all the earth keep silence before him."

Then the whole school sang two verses of "For the beauty of the earth," the words of which were lettered on a black-board for the benefit of the younger children able to read. A short and simple prayer of thanksgiving by the superintendent followed. The flowers that the little ones had brought were spoken of, and they sang.

"I asked the lovely little flower
Who gave her perfume sweet,
And dressed her in her velvet coat,
So beautiful and neat,
And she told me it was God
Who cloth'd her with such care
And taught her how to sweetly breathe
Upon the evening air."

Then the six children present that day passed behind a screen to a corner of the room, carrying their chairs with them.

Behind the screen was a space about eight feet square. This screen, by the way, had been made as a gift to the Sunday school by a young man who had studied manual training. Hanging by hinges on the side wall was a board one and one half feet wide and six feet long. When this was raised and propped at either end it served nicely for a table, and stood one and one half feet from the floor. A motherly woman was the leader of the little group. She was a farmer's wife and had a family of children. To attend classes or conventions was out of the question, but by reading she kept in touch with the best educational thought.

Because the Beginners were behind the screen they could not see what was going on in the rest of the room. Sounds did not disturb them, and they gave their whole attention to what their teacher said and had for them to do. The lesson for the day was "The Sun a Helper,"¹ but the teacher did not begin with the lesson story. She showed a plant in flower and let the children look at and admire it. She asked for stories about flowers they had seen, and listened while they told her about pussy willows which they had found, alder blossoms which they had seen and the new green grass growing close beside the doorsteps at home.

It was necessary for the children to be quiet and not disturb older members of the school, hence they did not sing, "The Alder by the River," suggested in the textbook, but drew pictures with colored crayons of green grass blades and pussy-willow branches. When the pictures were drawn, the teacher led the children to think how all winter long the grasses and flowers had been fast asleep waiting for the time to wake up. The children were asked to tell what they did when they were tired and sleepy and what wakened them when it was time to get up. They closed their eyes and made believe sleep. To rouse them the teacher recited

"When I'm softly sleeping
In the early morn,
Through my window creeping
The sunbeams come, new born,
They gently say good morning,
Then with golden light
Peeping through my curtain
Make my room so bright."¹

One by one the children opened their eyes and looked around to show that they were awake. Next the teacher asked how they felt when they stood in the sunshine. The sun was shining through the window, and the children went on tiptoe

¹ See Lesson 29 in Beginners' Teacher's Text Book, Second Year, Part III.

to discover how one did feel when standing in the sunlight. Having had this experience, it was easy to understand that the sun helps to waken grasses and flowers from their winter's sleep. By this time the children were ready for the story, "The Sun a Helper," and gathered round the teacher to listen. At the close of the story the children repeated after the teacher the verse, "He maketh his sun to rise," and the words of a very simple sentence prayer of thanksgiving for the sun. After the prayer the children spent a few moments in holding and looking at the picture provided for the teacher's use in teaching the lesson. It is a picture of children standing in a field of blue flowers and is called "The Blue Meadow." They examined the pot of seeds planted there weeks before, and when they saw the tiny plants exclaimed, "The sun has helped them to grow." To deepen the impression of the lesson the teacher gave the children a few more seeds to plant in another pot. This second pot the children carried to a dark closet where they left it to see whether or not the seeds would grow when there was no sun to wake and help them.

At the time for the school to be dismissed the screen was removed and the children stood with the older members of the school for the closing song and prayer. The folders containing the lesson story were given the children as they said good-by to their teacher.

APPENDIX

STANDARD FOR A BEGINNERS' DEPARTMENT

THE following standard for a Beginners' Department was prepared by expert Elementary workers under the direction of the Children's Work Committee of the Sunday School Council. It presents the best plans for doing the best things to bring about the best results in the life of a child.

What should appear in the conduct of a child as a result of the teacher's work is first stated; then those things which a child must have in order that these results may come; lastly, the best methods and plans for doing the work. These are designated respectively as the Standard in conduct, Standard in teacher's aims, and Standard in means.

The use of this Standard will mean increased efficiency in any Beginners' Department because it provides two essentials for good work—knowledge and definiteness.

The Standard for a Beginners' Department is that which it is possible for a child to become during the years of four and five.

What the child becomes, manifests itself in conduct.

CONDUCT

I. The conduct of the Beginner may manifest:

1. Love, trust and reverence for God.
2. Association of the heavenly Father with daily life.
3. Right behavior.
4. Love for God through prayer, praise, and effort to please him.
5. Love for others through acts of helpfulness.

AIMS

II. To realize these ends in conduct, the child must have:

1. A knowledge of the power of God, to give love, protection, and care.

2. A consciousness of God as his heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as his friend.
3. Ideals of right conduct.
4. Opportunities for worship.
5. Opportunities for helpfulness.

MEANS

III. As means for realizing these ends, provision should be made for:

1. Religious instruction and religious experience suited to the child of Beginners' age, secured through:
 - (a) The use of Beginners' Graded Lessons.
 - (b) The story method and informal conversation with pictures and objects.
 - (c) Contact with nature.
2. An environment which fosters religious feeling, secured by:
 - (a) Providing a separate room (curtained or screened place where room is not available).
 - (b) Making the room or corner attractive, home-like and childlike; light and well ventilated; appropriate in color and decoration.
 - (c) Furnishing chairs suitable for little children (preferably arranged in a circle).
 - (d) Adequate materials for teacher and children.
 - (e) Having a separate program for the entire session where room is available.
3. Opportunities for self-expression, secured through:
 - (a) Worship in song, prayer, offerings, and Bible verses.
 - (b) Conversation, retelling of stories, and hand-work.
 - (c) Self-control in Sunday school.
 - (d) Deeds of kindness possible for little children.
4. Teachers qualified by nature, training and religious experience, that is, teachers who

- (a) Possess a sympathetic understanding of child life.
 - (b) Have a personality attractive and helpful to children.
 - (c) Seek frequent contact with little children in their home, school, and play life.
 - (d) Are graduates or students in a Training Course, a Community Training School or a School of Principles and Methods.
 - (e) Are continuing their specialized training in a Graded Union or by the reading of one specialization book a year.
 - (f) Lead a sincere Christian life.
5. Children of similar interests and limitations grouped into a Beginners' class or department.
- (a) Comprising children four and five years of age.
 - (b) Having a teacher or superintendent and assistants.¹
 - (c) Promoting children about six years of age to the Primary Department on annual promotion day.

DIRECTIONS FOR OBSERVATION AND FOR PRACTICE TEACHING BY THE TRAINING CLASS

BOTH the observation of teachers and children when in Sunday school and the opportunity for practice teaching by the students of a training class are most helpful parts of a training course if carried out carefully and thoroughly.

In a City Institute training class made up of young students in preparation for future teaching the following directions for observation and for practice teaching should be carried out with care. This will be found to be a most valuable feature of the course. When the course is used by the superintendent of a Beginners' Department with her

¹ NOTE.—If children under four years of age attend Sunday school, special provision should be made for them in a Cradle Roll class.

assistants, the plan for observation and practice will require modification.

In planning the work seek to learn of Beginners' Departments that are most advantageous for visiting. In cities there will be always a choice to be made, and it will be wise to go outside of one particular denomination in seeking the best places to visit. Sometimes, a poorly taught group will show what ought not to be done, and students may consider what would be an improvement. Judgments should be made on the basis of the principles discussed in the lessons, but inexperienced teachers should not be hasty in decisions, and all need to be kind in negative criticism, remembering that there are conditions affecting management and teaching, of which visitors may not know.

There are two ways of planning for observation work: in some classes it may come on appointed Sundays between certain lessons of the course, as suggested in the outline below. In others it will be better to leave the observation days until the completion of the course of study. The practice teaching should certainly come after the study and after most, if not all, of the observation.

FIRST VISITING DAY

Observe a group of children four to six years of age in Sunday school. Report in writing of three tendencies observed; for one, the tendency to investigate. Tell in what way these were evident. Always carry a notebook and take notes of points of interest while observing.

SECOND VISITING DAY

After the sixth lesson visit the same, or another group of Beginners and be prepared to report at the next class session any indications noted of reverence, gratitude, or obedience. Also make note of any training being given in either of these directions. For this, observe first the manner and expression of the children. Watch for evidences of the indirect influence of the teacher as well as for direct instruction. Does there

seem to be a spirit of reverence on the part of all? A spirit also of obedience?

THIRD VISITING DAY

After the seventh lesson visit a Beginners' Department meeting in its own room and study its good and bad points, classifying these, and writing them down. Observe also and make note of the motherly qualities of some one teacher.

FOURTH VISITING DAY

After the eleventh lesson visit the Department again seeking to discover how (*a*) feelings are cultivated; (*b*) self-activity used; (*c*) the principle of the point of contact applied in the teaching observed. Give a written report of this observation with at least one illustration each of *a*, *b*, and *c*.

FIFTH AND SIXTH VISITING DAYS

After the fourteenth lesson spend half of each class hour of these two Sundays in visiting, and then go to the classroom for discussion of observations made. On one day make a special study of the singing and on the other of the praying and the singing. Try to see also if there is any play spirit evident, and if so, tell in what way. Judge of these three things from the principles already studied and the needs of the children that have been considered.

SEVENTH VISITING DAY

After the seventeenth lesson study the story that is told by a teacher to children, and the way it is told. Compare with what you have been studying and note all the good points you can.

TWO DAYS OF PRACTICE TEACHING

After the seventh visiting day provide for two practice days in the training class. Practice in story-telling is most desirable, and will be enjoyable when the members of the training class are in full sympathy with each other. Stories may be selected or assigned by the leader and three or four be told

on the first practice day, and each one discussed. Let another group be taken in the same way on the second day. If the class is large, a third session may well be devoted to this purpose at this point or at a later time in the practice course.

FINAL VISITING DAYS

At the end of the course of study take from four to six visiting days, using two of these days in visiting groups previously observed, with special reference to points studied in the later lessons; for example, the control of the children, the successful management of a department, the use of pictures, and the offerings. Report on these orally or in writing. On two other days visit other groups, not before visited, if possible, and note conditions, methods, and programs evident. If other groups cannot be visited, or the Beginners' group previously visited is very small, it will be wise to visit one or more Primary Departments to become familiar with what Beginners will pass on to, and to see the likenesses and differences between the two departments. One or two final sessions of the training class should be held for report and discussion of observations.

TWO DAYS FOR PROGRAM MAKING

Devote two sessions of the class to program development. Each student may prepare at home a program for one Sunday. These should be read to the class and criticized on the two days, or this work of preparation may be done in the class on one day and be taken up for discussion the next day.

SEVERAL DAYS OF PRACTICE TEACHING

A group of Beginners' children should be taught by different members of the training class on successive days, while the rest, with the Training Class leader, observe the work. Discussion and suggestion should follow this teaching.



NATURE INTERESTS OF LITTLE CHILDREN



A BEGINNERS' GROUP ABOUT THE PIANO



Permission of Frances W. Danielson

BEGINNERS' DEPARTMENT ROOM



A BEGINNERS' DEPARTMENT ROOM

Permission of Bertha Laine

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